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**Towards a Poetics of Nostalgia:  
The Nostalgic Experience in Modern Fiction**

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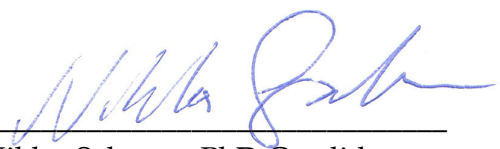
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## Abstract

In recent years there has been a body of studies relating nostalgia and fiction in political, sociological, feminist, or historical ways. This thesis, instead, sets out to perform an unusual textual study of nostalgia in modern fiction in order to work towards a poetics of nostalgia. Although the experience of emotion is private, the object of analytical discourse must be to approach this experience with objective tools. The thesis therefore develops a method for analyzing the experience of nostalgia in literary texts and then uses this method to study how nostalgia *can* be evoked in readers. The method works through close textual readings, developed through reader-response and narratological theories and validated through a thorough investigation of modern nostalgia in general. The result is a taxonomy of nostalgic strategies that *possibly* create nostalgic reactions in readers.



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## Introduction

On the back cover of the Penguin edition of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) one can read: "Virginia Woolf's lyrical, nostalgic novel [...]." Likewise, the back cover of the same company's edition of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) reveals that it is indeed the "most nostalgic and reflective of Evelyn Waugh's novels." Apropos of the publishing of Fitzgerald's short story collection, *All the Sad Young Men* (1926), Brooks Cottle writes that,

Unlike most titles under which books of short stories are published, the tag F. Scott Fitzgerald has put upon his third collection of stories is significant. "All the Sad Young Men" very accurately supplies the key to the dominant mood of the best stories in the book. That mood is the nostalgia of his young men growing out of their youth, the sadness with which they gaze back into that "country of illusion, of youth, of the richness of life, where their winter dreams had flourished." (276)

What do the readers actually mean when they call a work of fiction nostalgic? The answer to that question is the foundation of this thesis.

Certainly one aspect of nostalgia is that of content; a narrative *about* nostalgia naturally can evoke nostalgia in the reader. *Brideshead Revisited* is about a man who looks back on his past with nostalgia, and the young men in *All the Sad Young Men* do occasionally dream back to their youthful experiences. Even Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* has occasional rushes of nostalgia, such as when she is reading a story to her youngest boy, James:

Oh, but she never wanted James to grow a day older or Cam either. These two she would have liked to keep for ever just as they were, demons of wickedness, angels of delight, never to see them grow up into long-legged monsters. Nothing made up for the loss. When she read just now to James, 'and there were numbers of soldiers with kettle-drums and trumpets', and his eyes darkened, she thought, why should they grow up, and lose all that? (67-68)

Mrs. Ramsay obviously feels nostalgic for her own childhood even though this emotion is first directed towards her son, and later at both her son and her daughter. For many readers, the identification with Mrs. Ramsay might make themselves nostalgic since she is nostalgic. However, that is not the kind of nostalgia we will be concerned with for two reasons. First, it is very obvious. If a text is about nostalgia then there is always a chance that this nostalgia will be transferred into the imagination of a reader. Second, and with a similar caution, we will not be interested in what a character feels, unless this affects the mood of the narration.

Furthermore, we will not be concerned with what could be called contextual nostalgia, that is, studies of nostalgia that are interested in how nostalgia works sociologically, historically, or politically. When it comes to Fitzgerald for example, critics such as Arthur P. Dudden in "Nostalgia and the American" have dealt with historical and social contexts of nostalgia within the idea of the American nation, and Wright Morris in "The Function of Nostalgia: F. Scott Fitzgerald" addresses nostalgia as subject matter in Fitzgerald's fiction. Cottle though first does not mention nostalgia as content matter but as a distinct and "dominant mood."

So we will speak of a nostalgic mood, or more specifically nostalgic aesthetics. Nostalgia is not only about reviving the past, about commercial retro ideas, about liking French new wave films. It is also about a specific aesthetic mood, and this mood can be evoked in a reader through a nostalgic poetics.

The critical literature about this experience has been very sparse. Fred Davis, in his monumental *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (1979), is one of the few who acknowledges the part aesthetics play in nostalgic art: "So frequently and uniformly does nostalgic sentiment seem to infuse our aesthetic experience that we can rightly begin to suspect that nostalgia is not only a feeling or mood that is somehow magically evoked by the art object but also a distinctive aesthetic modality in its own right [...]" (73). In his chapter "Nostalgia and Art" he commences a project that defines a nostalgic style in art. Davis complains that "the musicologist, the art historian, and the literary critic" (83) have not yet defined such a style. For example, the scene from *To the Lighthouse* is about nostalgia but it also contains certain nostalgic stylistics which reinforce the nostalgic content. Could there be something about the narration itself, in its use of free indirect speech, which arouses nostalgia? What role does the expression "long-legged monsters" play when it is contrasted with "angels of delight"? How strong is the juxtaposition between present and past, adulthood and childhood? What exactly is it that the characters will lose? We are not about to answer all these questions now; we just cite them to illustrate what kind of questions we will deal with. However, in order to illustrate the process, here is one example. The image of "long-legged monsters" is cleverly contrasted with the childhood imagination of soldiers and kettle drums in order to emphasize

present and past times, and this makes identification with one's own childhood possible, as well as establishing the result of the time arrow as something forever lost.

We do not necessarily have to work with something that so explicitly contains nostalgic content. Another line from *To the Lighthouse* also possibly evokes nostalgia:

The nights now are full of wind and destruction; the  
trees plunge and bend and their leaves fly helter skelter  
until the lawn is plastered with them and they lie  
packed in gutters and choke rain pipes and scatter  
damp paths. (146)

Here there is no obvious nostalgic content: no characters remembering their pasts, and no reflective commentaries about the passage of time. Still, readers might experience this nostalgically? Why? The clash between clock time (arising from the polysyndeton) and the presence of the poetic description activate our imagination for something outside time, or more specifically, something that resists time. At the same time the rhythm reinforces the notion of time passing illustrated by the accentuated motion in the sentence from active verbs such as "plunge," "bend," and "fly" as well as addressing autumn as a symbol for change.

Another example of nostalgic style can be found in the following quotation from *The Great Gatsby*:

[...] only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon  
slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer  
tangible, struggling unhappily, undesperingly, toward  
that lost voice across the room. (142)

The citation above illustrates how nostalgia might flow from the text itself in its stylistic qualities: repeated alliterations, rhythmical flow, the use of words such as “no longer,” “lost,” and “slipped away” that allude to elusiveness, temporal directions in “toward,” distance in “across”; all creating a nostalgic modality of its own. This analysis of nostalgic stylistics is an example of what is the focus of this thesis.

If we return to Davis’ theory of an aesthetic nostalgic modality, it can be seen as inspirational since he himself did not develop the subject in any detail. Nevertheless, his ideas have gone mostly unnoticed and they were even reviewed as “provocative” on the webpage for the *Nostalgia and the Shapes of History* conference at Queen Mary’s College (2008). The increasing number of texts about literary nostalgia have primarily focused on the public nostalgia from a social or cultural context, thus not recognizing the private subjective nostalgic experience or questions about nostalgic style. These texts include Svetlana Boym’s *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001), Linda Hutcheon’s “Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern” (2000), *Narratives of Nostalgia, Gender and Nationalism* (1997), or Linda M. Austin’s *Nostalgia in Transition, 1780-1917* (2007). The very title of Renée R. Trilling’s *The Aesthetics of Nostalgia: Historical Representation in Old English Verse* (2009) illustrates how desirable it is to study aesthetics but how the result ends up in contextual nostalgia.

The few articles that claim to study nostalgic style never reach their intentions. Catharine H. Savage writes in “Nostalgia in Alain-Fournier and Proust” that the author can evoke memory “through the conjuring powers of poetry, using perhaps entirely different verbal and sense materials from those of the ‘memory’ but creating the past again in himself and his reader through this suggestive magic [...]” (167) but never follows up this intention and ends up reflecting about the function of nostalgia for the characters in



the novels instead. Likewise, Tamara S. Wagner sets out in *Longing: Narratives of Nostalgia in the British Novel 1740-1890* (2004) to look at nostalgia structurally in Jonathan Lamb's *A Tale of Rosamund Gray* since "[n]ostalgia," she writes, "is central to the novel's structure as well as to its interrelated stories" (41), but is still caught up in the web of nostalgic representation.

There are a couple of exceptions though. Aaron Santesso studies the stylistics of nostalgia in *A Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* (2006). He investigates the nostalgic aspects of romantic eighteenth-century poetry, and how the elegies and pastorals of Goldsmith and Gray among others created familiar nostalgic tropes that are still in function today.<sup>1</sup> His work is a continuation of Laurence Lerner's *The Uses of Nostalgia: Studies in Pastoral Poetry* (1972). Ruth Abbott explores the textual memory and the process of remembering and forgetting a text in Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" in a paper at the *Nostalgia and the Shapes of History* conference held at Queen Mary's College in June 2008. In addition, Vera Dike's *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film: The Uses of Nostalgia* (2003) at least performs close readings that acknowledge a relationship between stylistics and nostalgia. However, these examples are rare enough for the critical community to appreciate a more thorough study of nostalgia and texts. In order to develop something of a poetics of nostalgic literature, we have to establish a theory of doing so. Nostalgia is an emotion, and as such it will prove hard to grasp, identify, and validate in a critical context. How do we analyze an emotion through art? What is the role of the reader? Where

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Davis makes a similar suggestion; we must separate a real nostalgic experience from a textual one: "The audience, too, without necessarily having any immediate or 'real' reason for feeling nostalgic, will upon seeing or hearing the material respond nostalgically since it, too, has through long associative exposure assimilated the aesthetic code that evokes the emotion" (82).

should our focus lie? Our first chapter “The Fictive Experience: Art and Emotion and Towards a Theory of an Analysis of Emotional Experiences in Fiction” deals with these problems and establishes in the end a method for examining how and why emotions are evoked in a reading. We will talk about experience since we will focus on the reader and their experience of nostalgia; hence we will lean heavily on reader-response theories. Since the experience of emotions is inevitably private, we must acknowledge that there is a speculative aspect of this method. But we always try to use objective tools in order to understand the personal emotion, and will always speak of possibility rather than truth. If nostalgia is evoked in one person, there is a possibility, even probability, that it also will be evoked in other people. When we looked at the examples from *To the Lighthouse* and *The Great Gatsby* earlier we emphasized vague words like “might” and “can” in terms of evocations of nostalgia since we have to speak about possibilities. In the process of developing a pragmatic methodology we will survey the terrain of art and emotions and reception theories. Advances in philosophy, psychology, and science have allowed for a more precise evaluation of how emotions do work, and this has largely constituted a cognitive model for analyzing emotions. Still, since our object of study is the subjective experience of emotions, we will discuss psychoanalytical reception theories along with social constructivist approaches when appropriate. The cognitive idea of emotions seems to be valid in terms of how certain garden-variety emotions (anger, fear, etc.) constitute a cognitive aspect. The concept that a belief has to be part of the experience supports this theory. However, emotions are obviously *not* only cognitive since there are physical, biological, and evolutionary forces active such as sweating, increased heart beats, and altered blood pressure. A prominent critic in our development of a pragmatic

methodology will be Noël Carroll who wisely and pragmatically acknowledges that emotions are made up of two components: “a cognitive component [...] and a phenomenological experience” (196). In terms of emotions evoked by fiction he prefers to use the term “thought” rather than “belief” in order to bridge the well known *paradox of fiction* (how we can react emotionally to art which does not constitute a real belief) that common cognitive critics struggle with. Additionally, philosopher Derek Matravers will provide an important distinction from the usual emotional cognitive theory with his *arousal theory*. Cognitive theories of emotions in art have mainly focused on how we identify with characters, mostly the protagonists, and how we express emotions towards other characters in a fictive narrative. Matravers opens up a field of study that is less cognitive and more phenomenological. He also deals with the ways emotions are aroused in a more subconscious way and incorporates moods in the field of emotive studies. This is important, as we will see in chapter two, when dealing with such a complex emotion as nostalgia that is created by many emotions and where there is doubt how cognitive nostalgia actually is.

Both Carroll and Matravers are philosophers; as such, they provide crucial entrances into some of the most demanding issues with art and emotions, but neither speaks clearly from a literary perspective or offers few insights into the methods of studying emotions in fictive narratives. Therefore it is convenient to engage with reader-response theories that offer tools about ways the actual analytical process should be executed. The choice of this particular analytical school stems from, as both Carroll and Matravers identify, the ideas of emotions as phenomena. In a study of emotions evoked by art, the subject who experiences them has to be at centre. Phenomenology's attraction is its refusal to evaluate art and its preference for

understanding how the essentials of phenomena are communicated to the receptor. In pure phenomenological criticism, though, the objectivity and complete formalistic *modus operandi* unhinges it from any literary context such as history, author biography, production mode, and critical reception. Although our method will be primarily a formalistic one, we will also consort to what Jonathan Culler names “the competent reader” in our re-experience of the text, a reader who is aware of contextual issues when they are crucial to the analytical process. Particularly two reader-response theorists will figure prominently in our development of method: Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish. Both provide necessary tools for understanding and analyzing the reader’s involvement in and concretization of the text. Where phenomenology tends to see experience as purely subjective, the more pragmatic and cognitive oriented phenomenological reception theorists, like Iser and Fish, understand that there are certain conventions and agreements between text and reader that facilitate similar reading experiences. Both Iser and Fish articulate the importance of the chronology of the reading experience. Iser’s theory is useful in order to understand the more explicit reader reactions to the major narrative strategies, especially how a reader’s *wandering viewpoint* is manipulated by the narrative. Fish provides a way of slowing down the reading process in order to access more implicit stylistic details within the analytical process. A companion tool to Iser’s and Fish’s strategies is the narratological apparatus of French structuralist Gérard Genette. Although Genette might not be linked to reception theories, his distinguished and detailed taxonomy of Narratology is useful in order to understand the consequences of different narrative tactics on nostalgic experiences.

Since one of the basic conclusions of our method developed in chapter one is that we have to gain very specific knowledge on how the particular emotion functions, the next chapter, “The Nostalgic Experience,” will deal with nostalgia as an experience. In this chapter, the essentials of nostalgia as an emotion will be reviewed, essentials that will then be a springboard for our literary analysis. But we will also make the distinction between nostalgia as an emotion and as a mood, a difference that will be important for our future analysis. It is vital that we speak of modern nostalgia as ideas about nostalgia that are firmly established around the beginning of the twentieth century and that prevail today. In speaking of the essence of nostalgia we, in a phenomenological way, submit ourselves to trans-historicity. At first sight there might be a conflict between studying nostalgia as a trans-historical emotion and at the same time defining a modern nostalgia. This conflict is a chimera though, but it has to be settled. Disregarding the linguistic complications of the word “nostalgia” since Johannes Hofer coined it in 1688, the essence of the emotion nostalgia should be considered a trans-historical one. There is no reason not to believe that people in all times and cultures have experienced the essence of nostalgia. However, nostalgia as a definition and word did not reach this essence until late modernity in the beginning of the twentieth century. Therefore, the modern concept of nostalgia equals that of the essence of nostalgia. In what basically seems to be a formalistic analysis of literary texts and nostalgia, there is still a need to briefly engage in the contextual events that led to the modern definition of nostalgia in order to understand its essence. This need instigate, for example, the divergence into the role modernity played in the stabilization of this nostalgic essence. Consequently, the historical interests are not motivating a study of *why* literary nostalgia became prominent in the era of modernity. It

is just a tool, in concordance with our methodology, to understand the essential aspects of the emotion itself.

Chapter three, “The Fictive Nostalgic Experience” is an introduction to the relationship between fiction and nostalgia, and will refine the method as developed in chapter one to suit the particular needs that nostalgia urges for. Chapter three merges the idea of fictive experience with nostalgia as an experience which results in a *fictive nostalgic experience*. The focus on subjective nostalgic experience is rather radical: when John N. Swift writes that Willa Cather “looked frequently and fondly back toward an uncorrupted, regularized and essentially *masculine* classical past [...]” (108) he represents a traditional and common way of studying nostalgia. Swift’s approach to nostalgia illustrates an attitude and focus we desire to abandon; we would never write that an author “looked frequently and fondly back” but rather how this attitude influenced the reading experience towards evoking nostalgic sentiments. As the title of this thesis exclaims, we will focus on modern fiction. The term “modern” is used specifically because of its vagueness and because we prefer to avoid the term *modernistic*, although many of our examples do arise from the modernist era. The main reason for this limitation is that the idea of modern nostalgia, as we will see in chapter two, emerged during the early stages of the twentieth century, and modernism was particularly bound, due to its reactions to modernity and the First World War as well as to new scientific results from Einstein, Bergson, Freud, among others, to engage in nostalgic discourse. By using the term *modern* rather than *modernistic*, we do not isolate our method and analytical tools to a specific period. As later examples will prove, the tools we develop will be equally applicable to postmodern texts or later. Equally, although this is not the case in this thesis, the same tools should be valuable in analysis of

earlier texts as well. The motivation of choice of texts from predominantly the modernist canon do not have to do with a desire to answer to the question *why* modernism was especially prone to evoke nostalgia *but* that these texts are brilliant examples of literature that create nostalgic experiences in readers and, as such, are exemplary in order to illustrate our theoretical propositions.

In both chapter one and three we consult examples of films rather than literature. Since film is fiction just as much as literature and shares much with literary narratives, there should be no real antagonism between them. Much that can be said about narratives of film is equally valid in terms of narratives of literature. However, there are crucial differences, especially in the ways literature necessitates a more active mental and imaginative phase in terms of interpretation. In a film a chair is already the visual image of a chair, but in literature we need the additional mental phase where we through linguistic communication visualize the word “chair” into an actual mental image of a chair. This means that the filmic chair will be visually the same for every viewer, whereas the literary “chair” will be more variable in the reader. From an analytical viewpoint it is easier to discuss examples of films than examples of literature, and this motivates the use of film in the earlier stages of this thesis in order to properly and pedagogically illustrate some of the more general theoretical issues that arise when we are developing our methods.

Chapters four through six will then be a survey of different strategies in literary fiction that create the possibility of nostalgic experience in the reader. The survey will resemble a slow zoom out, looking first at the smallest segments of literary texts such as stylistics and micro-narratology, then examining nostalgic imagery before looking at how whole narrative

structures work nostalgically. We will once again emphasize that we are working with *possibilities* and *probabilities*, and that the analytical method must contain a certain element of private speculations, even though the object always is to generalize these speculations into a more objective theory.

In the final chapter, we will use our method, and our analyzing tools, to perform a complete investigation of what constitutes the nostalgic experience in William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*.

Hopefully this thesis will make two contributions to literary criticism. The first, and more general one, is to explore how the reader can experience emotions in texts and develop a valid method for a proper analysis of this reading process. The second one is more specific: how can we account for the fact that certain reading experiences of texts are nostalgic? I sincerely hope that this thesis will provide resources for analyzing emotions, nostalgia in particular, and show how nostalgia occurs as a part of a reading experience. With these tools perhaps we can make sense of what it actually means when somebody says: "This book was really nostalgic!"





# Chapter One

## The Fictive Experience: Art and Emotion and Towards a Theory of an Analysis of Emotional Experiences in Fiction

### Introduction

“poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings [...]” (Wordsworth 116)

### Art and Emotions

It is fundamental that one strong aspect of the attraction of literature lies in the emotional responses it is able to evoke in us. We read for pleasure suggests Norman Holland, implying that pleasure means the pleasure of experiencing emotions (4). Nevertheless, relating art and emotions has often been considered either too subjective to attach a scientific value to an analysis, or a detour from the structures of the text as the central aim of research during the era of structuralism and deconstruction. A consideration of subjective emotional responses to literature was wildly criticized by Wimsatt and Beardsley in their highly influential essay “The Affective Fallacy” (1949) where they tried to prove that the affective suggestiveness in certain words creates such a variety of interpretations that any kind of objectivity is lost in literary criticism. Even though they did not neglect the importance of emotions in experiences of art, they disqualified it for academic studies. Especially troublesome was what they called *the affective*

*relativism*, based on the different subjective, historical, and social contexts within the experience (Wimsatt and Beardsley 27).

Perhaps the common negative attitude towards exploring art and emotions descends from Plato whose opinion was that art primarily addresses the emotions and therefore was an evil plague in undermining reason.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in a way, Plato's ideas exhibit, long before Wimsatt and Beardsley, a tendency to assess and evaluate art based on how (or if) it arouses emotions. William James, in *The Principles of Psychology Volume 2* (1890), made a case for how there were different kinds of taste in emotional response, "classic taste" and "romantic taste" where the classic taste was valued higher than that of the romantic taste (468-70). We also find Kantian ideas of the sublime in Robin Collingwood's *The Principles of Art* (1938) where he describes how art that uses literary conventions or formulas to create emotional response among audiences are less artistic (275-76). The valuating approach has also accounted for the common scholarly distaste for sentimentality.<sup>3</sup> One such example is what Linda Williams refers to as *body genres* (horror, sex, and melodrama)<sup>4</sup>, art that arouses the most physical emotional responses in us and hence is not "intellectual" or refined (Williams

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<sup>2</sup> Plato's reservations against poetry are expressed in *The Republic*, mainly in books 2, 3, and 10, as well as in the dialogue *Ion*. The arguments against poetry can be concluded as mistrust in the poet's knowledge of the truth. The antagonism against feelings is most clearly expressed in book 10 of *The Republic* 605a-606d. Plato acknowledges the strength of emotions in art but banishes its function within the republic as misleading and un-educational: "And the same may be said of lust and anger and all the other affections, of desire, and pain, and pleasure, which are held to be inseparable from every action—in all of them poetry feeds and waters the passions instead of drying them up; she lets them rule, although they ought to be controlled, if mankind are ever to increase in happiness and virtue." (Plato 334, 605d)

<sup>3</sup> For a brilliant defense of sentimentality see Robert C. Solomon's "In Defense of Sentimentality."

<sup>4</sup> The term was actually coined by Carol J. Clover in "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film" but then only to include the two genres horror and pornography (189).

5). This distaste is well articulated by Martha C. Nussbaum in *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*: “According to some influential modern views that have left a deep mark on popular stereotypes, emotions like grief, anger, and fear come from an animal irrational side of personality that is to be sharply distinguished from its capacity for reasoning and for forming beliefs. Emotions are simply bodily reactions” (79).

Returning to ancient philosophy, Aristotle had a more positive attitude towards emotions in art and believed in the positive effects of catharsis through an emotional art experience. New Criticism was one of the first theoretical schools that paid attention to how the organic whole as well as stylistics affected the reader. In *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) I. A. Richards discusses how certain emotions in reading experiences are triggered by psychological factors (73-82). It is a revolutionary attempt, and one of the first to establish a theory that considers the value of the reader’s emotional reactions.<sup>5</sup> He tried to show that literary emotions are not exceedingly different from ordinary emotions, and therefore the literary emotions are human feelings in their own right, brought about by the particular aesthetics of the text.<sup>6</sup>

The interest in the psychology behind emotions and Freud’s theories about the way art fulfils our desires, as seen in Richards’ work and somewhat later Charles Mauron’s *Aesthetics and Psychology* (1935), stimulated studies

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<sup>5</sup> Richards drew heavily on Aristotle’s ideas of catharsis; Aristotle merged the emotions fear and pity, but Richards preferred an oscillation between them as he placed them in opposition to each other (Russo 287). Richards was also much in debt to biologist Charles Scott Sherrington, whose concept of nerve integration provided him with a neural background for his organization of psychological activities in the reading process (Russo 179).

<sup>6</sup> This is a general thesis, also acknowledged by Bleich (34), Richards argues throughout *Principles of Literary Criticism*. Examples of this argumentation are to be found, for example, on page 11 and 232.

that put emotions and art within the jurisdiction of psychoanalytic thinking. Both Norman Holland's *The Dynamics of Literary Response* (1968) and David Bleich's *Subjective Criticism* (1978) engage us in how fantasy, desire, and pleasure relate to our experiences of fiction. However interesting their approaches are, their ambitions still appear somewhat narrow. This limited perspective has also been criticized by Noël Carroll. "Psychoanalytical critics," he writes, "seem more concerned with certain generic, ill-defined forces like desire and pleasure [...]" ("Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 191). Psychoanalytical critics thus do not seem much occupied with what Carroll calls "the garden-variety emotions" (191) such as anger, fear, and pity.

Since Holland's and Bleich's studies there has been further advances in modern psychology and cognitive theories about emotions that have sparked renewed interests in the relationship between art and emotions. Much of this debate has returned to either the basic issues of the general nature of emotions or how we can account for emotions in experiences of either fiction (not real) or abstract art. The former usually resides in psychological studies, whereas the latter is discussed within philosophy. Furthermore, social or cultural studies have recently shown an interest in how emotions are configured within social, cultural, and historical contexts. Even if these areas of research stumble into the world of art and fiction, the perspectives from literary studies are surprisingly few.

Since nostalgia is a complex affective experience we need to develop something of a nostalgic poetics in order to both validate its existence in correlation with literature and create a toolbox for analyzing how texts engage us in nostalgic literary experiences. This will be done in chapter three, but in order to do so we first have to explore more generally how feelings and art are associated. In this chapter we will deal with the most critical and

demanding questions and arguments within the latest theoretical contexts about art and emotions. More specifically, we will deal mostly with fiction since our project is focusing towards literature. In the end of the chapter we will summarize our findings and settle on a method for analyzing emotions in fiction. But first we need to define the basics of our attitude towards art. It is fundamental for this thesis that we have to appreciate fiction as an experience in order to evaluate and analyze subjective emotional responses to texts. This needs further clarification and confirmation and we need to address what Wimsatt and Beardsley called the “affective relativism,” which we will refer to as the *problem of experience*.

## **The Experience of Fiction**

### **Fiction as Experience**

The importance of looking at literature as an experience is adequately expressed by Derek Matravers: “To appreciate a work of art it is not usually sufficient merely to have heard of it or heard about it, one has actually to have experienced it” (86). The connection between literature and experience has a history that, at least semantically, commences in New Criticism and I. A. Richards’ pioneering work in *Principles of Literary Criticism* (2). It is then developed implicitly in Roman Ingarden’s theories of the *concretization* in *Das literarische Kunstwerk. Eine Untersuchung aus dem Grenzgebiet der Ontologie, Logik und Literaturwissenschaft* [*The Literary Work of Art. An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature*] (1931) and finds its most creative outlets among the critics of the schools of Phenomenology and Reader-Response Criticism of the late 1960s and 1970s. The interest in

reading as experience is analogous to the shift of focus from the author and the objectivity of the text, to the *subjectivity* of the actual experience of the text. The theorists of Reader-Response Criticism all have varied approaches and definitions of this process, but they all share a common idea that it is the reader's response to the text that creates reactions such as "meaning" or "value" and thus has to be the focus for any literary theory. Consequently, we will now look at how some theorists relate literature and experience.

The two representatives from the psycho-analytical branch of Reader-Response Criticism, Holland and Bleich, both acknowledge the correlation between reading and experience, but in their accounts it is the psychological mechanisms that control our reading experience. Holland continues the tradition of New Criticism and shows no interest in author intentions and a considerable trust in the objectivity of the text. What he introduces, as a continuation of Richards' ideas, is the importance of the subjective response to the objective text. His theory depends on a dualism between the object (text) and the subjective understanding/interpretation<sup>7</sup> of the object. In his introduction he clearly sketches the critical method he proposes. First we have to study the text objectively, then we have to value our own subjective response to it, and finally we have to try to connect these (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* xiv). It is a valuable method but Holland never really develops this method or is able to fuse his classic separation of object and subject. When he writes that "this book must mingle subjectivity and objectivity, for that is its task: to build a conceptual bridge from literary texts objectively understood to our subjective experience of them" (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* xiv) he steps in the problematic sphere of how we can both

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<sup>7</sup> This is Bleich's terms. His distinction between understanding and interpretation is that understanding is how you construct verbal meaning while interpretation is the explanation of this meaning (Bleich 94).

understand a text objectively *and* subjectively.

Wolfgang Iser, in “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach” develops Ingarden’s division of a literary work’s two poles, “the artistic [which] refers to the text created by the author, and the esthetic [which refers] to the realization accomplished by the reader” (50), to encourage the idea that the crucial aspect of the reading process lies between the text and its realization:

the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text, or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two. The work is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the reader – though this in turn is acted upon by the different patterns of the text. (50)<sup>8</sup>

Like Iser, Stanley Fish speaks of the importance of regarding literature as an experience and stresses its temporal qualities and the objectivity of the text as a crucial difference between the classic hermeneutic question “what does this

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<sup>8</sup> Iser’s praise for Ingarden’s phenomenological reading theories can be attributed to Ingarden’s development of how the text is concretized in the reader, thus acknowledging the importance of the reader in the reading process. Furthermore, Ingarden represents a crucial development of Husserl’s phenomenology into a literary theory. Iser, however, disagrees on several points with how Ingarden views the relationship between reader and the text. Menachem Brinker in “Two Phenomenologies of Reading: Ingarden and Iser on Textual Indeterminacy” identifies primarily two of Iser’s objections. The first one is that Ingarden imagines that there are more or less successful concretizations of the text. Iser argues that there is no need to view concretizations as “appropriate” or “inappropriate” rather just as different concretizations of the same text without any specific value connected to them (Brinker 204). The second one has to do with the degree of activity in the reader: “The ‘original emotion’ which sets the reader on his way by attracting him to the artistic quality of the literary work, is tied to the actual words used in the text rather than to the gaps, blanks and hidden meanings of the work which are not formulated in the text” (Brinker 204).



sentence mean?" and his substitution "what does this sentence do?" (72). This substitution sparks one of the key issues of the Reader-Response Criticism, one that almost fanatically departs from the old school idea of valuation. For critics like Iser and Fish, then, meaning is experience, is effect. It is never a matter of valuing something as superior or inferior, it is only a matter of reporting that something is happening.

Jonathan Culler in his theory of the competent reader is not completely freed from the structuralists' fondness for the text, but he is well aware of how meaning is created through the use of an "internalized grammar" (101) that produces a variety of interpretations. Culler is less open in regard to Iser or Fish as to the complete integrity of the reader's experience:

we have only to ask what we want a theory of literature to account for. We cannot ask it to account for the "correct" meaning of a work since we manifestly do not believe that for each work there is a single correct reading. We cannot ask it to draw a clear line between the well-informed and the deviant work if we believe that no such line exists. Indeed, the striking facts that do require explanation are how it is that a work can have a variety of meanings but not just any meaning whatsoever [...] (110)

In Culler's literary theory, the reader is central, but his experience is not unlimited. Rather, it is controlled by not only the reader's literary competence but also the limited possibilities that the text gives him.

Michael Riffaterre addresses a common problem: that of the difference between a stylistic study and an analysis of a reader's experience. If we look at a text as a text and define structure and style from a perspective of looking

at the text as a whole, we lose what actually is the reading experience, a temporarily chronological experience. Riffaterre writes about how these structuralist critics “assume that the definition of categories used to collect data is also valid to explain their function in the poetic structure [...]” (33).

Although showing differences in how the exact mechanisms of the reading process are executed and how important the pseudo-objectivity of the text is, the Reader-Response theorists all embrace the idea of literature as experience and stress the importance of the chronological experience of the text. They all encourage the study of how the reader engages in the text but differ in how this engagement is constituted. It can be re-experiencing the author’s experience (Poulet), co-creating the work of art by filling in the gaps (Iser), “[...] *the developing responses of the reader in relation to the words as they succeed one another in time*” (Fish 73), playing out our inner subconscious drives in the experience (Holland), the “symbolizations” of the text by the reader (Bleich 111), or the literary conventions perceived by the competent reader (Culler). Similarly there is a transition from still observing the text as objective (Riffaterre, Culler) to more or less abandoning the text completely (Fish). Of course, this abandonment does not mean that they do not recognize that the text is what actually triggers the readers’ responses, only that it should not be the focus of analysis.

Stressing the perspective of seeing literature as an experience is not radical; in what now seems to be a consensus around the most adequate entrance into effective textual studies, experience plays a central role, especially when a critical study embodies the sometimes speculative subjective sphere of emotional response. Along with focusing on experience comes a swarm of potential difficulties and problems within critical analysis.

### The Problem of Experience

“The Problem of Experience” is the name of the penultimate paragraph in Gregory Currie’s essay “The Paradox of Caring: Fiction and the Philosophy of Mind” (74). It is a striking fact that it comes so late in his essay, since in the end he has to abandon any kind of objective aim and yield to the subjectivity of emotive experience and acknowledge how problematic it is to study subjective experiences whether they are emotional or otherwise. There seem to be two main factors, sometimes intertwined: the psychological aspects of experience and what we will call the role of *cultural determinators*. In the following section we will address some perspectives of the problem but leave the problem unsolved for later.

The range of contexts and private biography, in the reading situation, is what Iser refers to as the structural reading act where the “mental images will be colored by the reader’s existing stock of experience [...]” (*The Act of Reading* 38). It can be a rereading of a text; it can be the particular mood we are in when we are reading, our state of health, the place we are reading in. Both Iser and Fish are also aware of the psychological dimension of reading. Fish talks about the “‘psychological effects’ of the utterance” (70) and Iser about text as mirror, how the “manner in which the reader experiences the text will reflect his own disposition [...]” (“The Reading Process” 56), thus leading us to Holland’s and Bleich’s incorporation of psychoanalytical theory in the theory of literary experience and Holland’s idea of the *identity theme*.

Holland identifies how the reader constructs the meaning within the limitations of the text (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 25), how the reader connects all parts of the text in his present reading position and “abstracts recurring images, incidents, characters, forms and all the rest into certain themes” (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 28). The key issue with Holland’s

study lies in his preoccupation with psychoanalysis. He addresses reading basically as stimuli of the Freudian pleasure principle, and that the pleasure lies in how the text stimulates our deepest desires or dreams. Still he warns against these ideological interpretations:

People have fantasies. That quite commonplace, extraliterary fact is one of two postulates on which this book rests. The other is also an empirical observation: whatever their sect, literary critics find central or core ideas that permeate and inform the literary work – this is what we mean when we say literary works have ‘organic unity.’ Psychoanalytic critics find a core of fantasy; other kinds of critics find cores of social, biographical, political, philosophical, moral, or religious meaning. (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 31)

He continues: “Whenever we talk about symbols, however, it is most important to remember that symbols are flexible and dynamic: they vary with the context. They do not represent a code of one-to-one correspondences that can be looked up in some ‘Freudian’ dreambook” (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 57).

Holland distinguishes what he terms *identity theme* as a certain personal way of dealing with everyday situations that spill over on our interpretation of texts as well (“The New Paradigm” 338). Bleich develops this and writes: “The basic motive for any response is the person’s need to replicate his personality style” (121). It seems probable that we bring, subconsciously, certain central ideas about life and the world, that we want to be confirmed through the text. This means that our evaluation of the text is based upon how well the text stimulates, or answers, these demands.

Bleich also speaks of the reader's symbolization of the text as interpretation (Bleich 111). Whereas Holland still sees the objective text as an authority, controlling the symbolization, Bleich denies the text that quality. Instead he is preoccupied with how the subjective experience is objectified within the different interpretative communities that we share. He spends a considerable time defending subjectivism against objectivism by citing important scientists and philosophers like Husserl as well as defining the paramount of the observer through Einstein, Bohr, and Heisenberg (18-21). Nevertheless, he seems to believe that there is a pseudo-objectivity that is gained by universality, repeatability, and predictability (38).

### **Cultural Determinators and Emotions in Art**

Iser, Holland, and Bleich all identify the need to not only penetrate through the psychological subjectivity within experience but also to realize that this psychology is necessarily based on a variety of cultural components and contexts. This position is equally valid when it comes to emotions. Just like emotions in general<sup>9</sup>, emotions in art are bound in various degrees to the specific culture of a time when the art was produced and consumed. The contemporary moral and aesthetic code, in combination with criticism, commercialism, and theories of interpretation, sets the frames for acknowledged conventions and a shared background in both authors and audiences: "Within the boundaries of certain cultures, there are certain criteria concerning which emotional responses are normatively correct – that

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<sup>9</sup> There has been a general division of those who mainly see emotions as biological functions (William James, MacLean), those who see emotions as evolutionary and thus universal (Darwin, Paul Ekman), and those who are more or less bound to see emotions in terms of social and cultural contexts (Hochschild, Collins). Seeing emotions as biological functions do not prevent us from regarding them as socially changeable (Carroll, "Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 198-99).

is, which emotions certain situations are supposed to elicit" (Carroll, "Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 206). Emotions such as jealousy, anger, repulsion, and fear are deeply grounded in what it is in our culture, at a certain time, that makes us jealous, angry, or scared.

However, temporality seems not always to be the main factor, but rather the cultural heritage, which can be seen in our habitual use of the term *classic*; we still today feel sorry for Odysseus when he returns to Ithaca and finds the suitors in charge, fear for Dante's infernos, or pity for Don Quixote in his futile attempts of heroic imaginations. These emotions are still within the diffuse definition of Western culture, and thus sharable through times. This appears to confirm that culture precedes time in importance, which is argued by Rom Harré who refers to the unpublished "Georgetown Experiments" conducted by Rom Harré and W. G. Parrott in 1991. These experiments, according to Harré, promote the idea of cultural variety of emotional response rather than its temporal disposition and show that at least a Western audience is more able to reach a consensus of certain emotions expressed in Western classical music than in choir music from Nepal (Harré 114-15). The obvious limitation of these experiments is that the opposite was never investigated: how a Nepal audience would respond to Western classical music. Nevertheless, there have been numerous cases where one cultural audience has "misinterpreted" the emotional content of art from another culture. This can also happen within the same culture. Consider Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill Volume 1* (2003), for example, where the extremely gory sword fights could create disgust or fear in a normal Western audience, but awe and aesthetic appreciation in those subcultures that are interested and immersed in Asian martial arts films. Perhaps we in a global society are more individuated than cultural in our responses to art than

before, and it is more valuable to consider the persona of the audience rather than its cultural context. Clearly we are all subject to a greater and greater diversity of influences now than before.

The more extreme claim is given to us by Robert Solomon who suggests that there might be no universal emotions at all (Solomon, "The Cross-Cultural Comparisons of Emotion" 262). Solomon argues that there is a greater individual difference in emotions within cultures than between cultures themselves (261-63). However, most theorists see the biological function as well as the social aspects which form emotions as important in the way emotions shape our perception of situations, focus our attention, and force us to act in certain situations (Carroll, "Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 198-99). It is probably a general consensus that different social, political, cultural, economical, lingual, and historical contexts *will* play a part in how we experience emotions even though these emotions might very well be biological.

### **The Nature of Emotional Experience**

At this point we have generally been speaking of experience as experience of the text and how cultural and psychological dimensions affect primarily the textual experience. This will prove to be a simplification of experience and we will here need to carefully sketch the different ways in which an experience works in terms of emotive response.

An emotional experience can be triggered either by the text itself or extra-textual aspects such as rumours, criticism, knowledge, media, and the actual context of the experience. As an example of extra-textual triggering imagine hypothetically that you are visiting your aging grandmother and after dinner you retire to a room that you used to sleep in when you visited

her as a boy. In one of the drawers you find a book – Stephen King’s *It* – which you read in this room when you were young. You study the cover and it scares you, both because the frightening eyes that stare at you make you feel uncomfortable and because the cover itself reminds you of when you read it as a young boy and how scared you were then. A sudden rush of nostalgia hits you when you sense both how long ago it was you were a boy and that those times are forever gone. This feeling in connection with hearing your grandmother’s voice in the stairway makes you sad that her life is approaching an end. Suddenly you get angry because you recall a critic you read lately that had a very negative attitude to Stephen King’s prose. You start reading and after a while you feel upset over how difficult it is to read the small font; it makes you think about that you have to make an appointment to the doctor and this, in turn, worries you. Then suddenly on page 3 you see a red dot that resembles blood and you feel disgusted but are quickly comforted when the smell of the dusty book reminds you of one of the summers in this very room when you read everything Ernest Hemingway wrote. As we can see, the actual process of reading (reading experience) in this case involves a whole spectrum of emotions and feelings, even moods, but none are directly linked to the actual text. It is not a reaction to the narrative, nor the fictive characters, nor its style and form. It is reactions that are triggered by the experience of reading the book but not its text. I propose to call such emotional experiences *extra-textual* since they are not triggered by the text itself. The opposite, and what we generally deal with when discussing art and emotions, would then be called *textual*.



The division between extra-textual and textual can be more complicated; there could be both extra-textual and textual triggers working simultaneously. You continue to read, and when Bill's brother meets the clown down in the sewer, a branch of a tree outside the window suddenly hits the glass and you react with terror. Would we call this reaction extra-textual or textual? I argue that this is basically a textual reaction since it is connected to the status of the text we are reading. Assuming we are reading *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* instead, we would probably not have reacted with terror at the sudden sound of the branch hitting the window. It is not the reading experience *per se*, but the actual reading of *It* and its text that have influenced us into an emotional state that makes us more aware of sounds around us.

Returning to the text, we can distinguish two different ways that we react to the text. The first, and most obvious, is a reaction to the representation of the story (plot and character). This will be discussed later as part of the simulation of the text. The second are emotions triggered by the narrative discourse (style, structure) in what I will call aesthetics and mood.

Finally, the emotions that are triggered in the subject of experience can either be emotions that are part of the text (diegetic) or personal, autobiographical (non-diegetic). This gives us the following scheme:

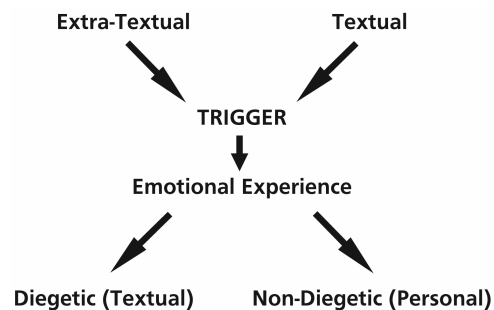


Fig. 1. The Emotional Experience of Art.

We do not need to explain this further now; we will return to these categorizations when we examine the nature of the actual emotional response to fiction.

## **The Experience of Emotions in Fiction**

Just like we have seen with fictive experience in general, there is a range of issues with connecting fictive experience with emotions. This section will deal with both how we should interpret and deal with emotions in general and how we should deal critically with emotions evoked through art. Entering and problematizing the contemporary fields of emotional studies, we will in the end suggest the usefulness of dividing emotions into emotions and moods in order to bridge the alternative theories of cognitive and non-cognitive emotions.

### **The Paradox of Fiction**

The issue of the paradox of fiction is a side effect created by the now commonly cognitive approach to emotions. If real emotions are cognitive reactions, how can we experience fictive emotions? However, before heading into the debate about the paradox of fiction let us briefly explain emotional reactions.

Emotional reactions can be divided into psychic or physical. “On the one hand,” writes Holland, “affect is psychic: we are of a certain feeling of rage, say, or joy or sadness or anxiety. At the same time, this feeling is accompanied by somatic changes: we laugh or cry or shudder. Pulse rate rises or falls. Breathing slows or quickens. Hands sweat. Thus, there can be

‘unconscious affect,’ where the physical symptoms show, but we are unaware of any feeling” (281). Emotions with physical effect, if they are unconscious, are non-cognitive based emotions, but Holland does not describe the other feelings as cognitive. One can imagine that a person can experience a psychic feeling without any cognitive attributes. However, modern studies seem to favour a cognitive approach to emotions and discard *feelings* as a synonym for emotions, since they consider the experience of emotion to be a cognitive act. Still, Holland probably means emotions in the modern sense when he writes about feelings, or? The confusion of meaning is probably a result of linguistic usage. We simply mean emotions when we say feelings and vice versa. Other times, feelings are clearly distinguished from emotions. Thus, it is wise to adopt a division between a feeling, or sensation, and a thought- or cognition-based approach. The former puts the actual sensation of the emotion at the core, whereas the latter holds the belief that emotions are referred to as conscious evaluation or judgment.

Much of the debate has been focusing on the intentionality or object of emotions. If we feel fear we fear *something*; if we experience anger, this anger is directed towards something or somebody. Involved as well is the idea of *belief* – that we have to believe the reality of the object of our feeling: if we feel fear of a dog, we have to believe that this dog is dangerous. This intentionality and belief constitute a cognitive behaviour. The degrees of cognitivism and the intensity of sensations change from one emotional reaction to another. It is very high in the fear of a snake and its sudden physical implications and rather low in that of frustration of a missed opportunity.

If we consider the intentionality as crucial, it is more difficult to explain how fiction actually can cause emotional response. It is called a paradox, since everybody agrees that we *can* feel genuine emotions through art but we *should not* because we are not reacting to real life but fiction. If we think that emotions can only be felt when we react to something within reality that affect us (the death of a family member or knowledge about our spouse's infidelity) it is hard to explain why we would *feel* anything for fictive characters and situations. This paradox addresses two issues. First, we are all aware that emotional reactions are not always rational. If someone has phobia for snakes, he will react with fear even though he knows it is only a harmless Garter snake. However, in the sense of the belief, the snake is still there, whereas if the snake occurs in fiction we know it is *not* present. Second, what is actually the difference between mourning the death of Marilyn Monroe whom we never met nor saw in real life and the suicide of Anna Karenina? One is a real life event and the other a fictive event.<sup>10</sup> This paradox, however, has sparked a renewed interest in reception theories; how do we actually experience fiction and can an explanation of this experience shatter the paradox?

I think we can all agree that emotions are a combined and complex set of feelings, sensations, and physical and phenomenological changes, and that this involves a varied degree of cognitivism in the attention to the object for the emotion. An experience of emotions can coexist with both the more direct feelings and a cognitive thought process. As Rom Harré has distinguished, “we can retrospectively disentangle the bits and pieces of evidence, of interpretation [...]” (111) after our emotional response; this suggests that

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<sup>10</sup> For an interesting discussion on how documentary and fiction produce different emotional reactions see Derek Matravers' *Art and Emotion* (57-82).

perhaps the chronology of the emotion is first sensational and then cognitive. Of course, we can turn things around: Noël Carroll prefers to see emotions as “made up of at least two components: a cognitive component, such as a belief or a thought about some person, place, or thing, real or imagined; and a feeling component (a bodily change and/or a phenomenological experience), where, additionally, the feeling state has been caused by the relevant cognitive state [...]” (“Art, Narrative, and Emotion” 196).

### **Fiction as Simulation**

One of the earlier and more famous propositions of how we can bridge our emotional responses to fiction over the paradox of fiction was Kendall Walton’s theory of *make-believe*. In a now legendary illustration of how audiences participate in a game of make-believe towards art Walton showed that we substitute the real emotion’s belief with a quasi belief or a fictional truth. In Walton’s illustration Charles is watching a horror movie where a huge green slime is moving towards him on the screen. Charles feels fear, but this fear, Walton interprets as different from real fear and calls it *quasi fear*: “He experiences quasi fear as a result of realizing that fictionally the slime threatens him. This makes it fictional that his quasi fear is caused by a belief that the slime poses a danger, and hence that he fears the slime” (*Mimesis as Make-Believe* 245). What Walton means is that we create a belief and a truth through our interaction with the fictive world in a game of make-believe, but that the emotions are not real emotions. This idea of quasi-emotions was quickly dismissed by several theorists, most notably Noël Carroll who explained that at least *he* was *genuinely* horrified by *The Exorcist* and did not feel quasi about anything (*The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* 74). There is no validity in describing emotions triggered by art as *not* real,

considering the phenomenology and arousal states of these emotions that have been certified through the physiological effects of emotional responses. Later, Walton also clarifies his idea, and while defending the importance of distinguishing real emotions from emotions derived from art, he rather talks about *simulation* than a game of make-believe (“Spelunking, Simulation, and Slime: On Being Moved by Fiction” 40).<sup>11</sup> The idea of simulation is, according to Keith Oatley, what Aristotle actually meant by mimesis rather than the misinterpretation by Henry James as “imitation” or “representation” (“A Taxonomy of the Emotions of Literary Response” 65). Aristotle did not mean that art had to imitate life, but rather simulate it, or more precisely create the fundamentals for a mental simulation in the audience (Oatley and Gholamain 266). Although the idea of simulation is mostly connected to the information age and computer games and programs, Oatley and Gholamain acknowledge that the idea of how humans are able to create models of reality and thus engage in simulation is not new (265-66). Simulation of reality through fiction is a complex process and an analysis of it includes the role of narrator, narration, focalization, identification, semantics, and the subjectivity of the one engaged in the simulation. Simulation can either be, as Robert Louis Stevenson expressed it in his essay “A Chapter on Dreams” (1888), quite close to the state of dreaming (127) or more like a report of events (Matravers 40).

There is no need to dwell further on these aspects; they will be closely examined in due course when appropriate. For now, it is only important to

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<sup>11</sup> In what has been mostly an interest in audiences’ feelings toward fictional characters there has been discussions on how our emotions towards fictive characters are closer to that of empathy and sympathy than the feelings the characters feel or experience themselves, building somewhat on Walton’s distinctions (Feagin; Gregory Currie “The Paradox of Caring”).

notify that simulation through imagination opens up possibilities for us to simulate reality through fiction. Let us instead return to the paradox of fiction. In mental simulation we are able to simulate real life, which then must include emotions as well. This leads me to what seems the most plausible attitude to the paradox of fiction, one that Carroll accommodates:

My answer to this challenge relies on my rejection of the supposition that emotions require beliefs in all cases. The cognitive theory of emotions requires a cognitive component, but, I would argue, the form that component can take is diverse, including not only beliefs, but thoughts and perhaps even patterns of attention. And, furthermore, the form that is most relevant to understanding our emotional responses to fictional narratives is thought, not belief. ("Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 209)

What Carroll actually means with "thought" is, of course, our ability to simulate through using our imagination. This is very different than the often used example of phobia and the snake. In the case of the phobia we are actually not simulating, but experiencing the snake although our beliefs are distorted about the danger of the reptile. If a person is phobic he can fairly easily experience the physic-psychological phenomena (shivering) of a real snake only by imaging it. We apparently *are* able to simulate emotions, as shown by our capacity to arouse ourselves sexually by pure imagination (Carroll, "Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 209).

### **The Meta-Experience**

Walton's notion about a game of make-believe might actually have some validity since simulation does require that we play by the rules otherwise we

won't be able to simulate reality. If we, for some reason, are watching a horror film and do *not* engage in the simulation we might laugh at the green slime rather than fear it. This can, of course, be a choice of our own or a matter of the contexts of the actual experience. But it can also be, supposedly, due to the nature of the narrative discourse.

Many have considered Bertholdt Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* and ideas of the epic theatre as a contrast to the classic drama in its lack of emotional involvement, at least empathy. Brecht's aim was to take the audience out of the dramatic rollercoaster ride in order for them to evaluate the play's political content. This evaluative process, one imagines, is closely connected with that of a more cognitive process in watching the play and perhaps a lesser degree of simulation. Brecht's characters sang songs about themselves, tore down the fourth wall, interacted with the boundaries of the realistic drama, and discussed their own roles in the play. They were engaged in what then was called *Verfremdungseffekt*, or distancing effects, and now is more commonly known as meta-aspects. These were not new ideas; we can trace them all the way back to the ancient Greek drama, but Brecht did theorize and conceptualize them in a new way. Brecht's plays were undeniably more explicitly political than Strindberg's or Ibsen's, but I do not recall being emotionally untouched by *Die Dreigroschenoper* [*The Threepenny Opera*] (1928) or *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis* [*The Caucasian Chalk Circle*] (1945) for example. Neither have the modernist film directors of European art cinema in the 1960s, who were deeply inspired by Brecht's epic theatre, neglected to address my feelings in films such as Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960) or Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Avventura* [*The Adventure*] (1960). And why should the epic qualities of fiction (epic in Brecht's terms) not evoke emotions since we have decided that emotions also have cognitive aspects? Not being



“in the drama” and not being seduced by classic narration and identification, does not mean a lack of emotional involvement. However, the game of simulation is somehow still altered and challenged by a narration that challenges its own narrative and this could effect our simulation of emotions as well. This issue has been addressed by several theorists of art and emotions.

“If *too* much mental prodding is necessary,” writes Susan L. Feagin in “Imagining Emotions and Appreciating Fiction,” “then you can’t even imagine the emotion: it all gets lost, as it were, in irrelevant thoughts” (59). This line of thought is carried to extremes by Carroll who illustrates, through works by Frank Stella, how some art “address[es] cognition exclusively” and therefore “does not traffic in emotions [...]” (“Art, Narrative, and Emotion” 193). But in fairness, the art Carroll depicts having no emotional impact (at least not garden-variety emotions) is quite rare. As I reported about my experience of Brecht earlier, the question of how meta-fiction affects the emotional experience is not a binary one, but rather a question of degrees. Matravers, influenced by Walton, observes this subtlety in reading as how “the experience of the game of make-believe must not compete with the experience of reading the book – the actual experience of running one’s eyes along sentences” (44). He suggests that a few breaks with the illusion of imagination and simulation are permitted as long as they do not disturb the actual fictive experience, or in Walton’s words everything has to be “integrated into a single complex phenomenological whole” (*Mimesis as Make-Believe* 295). Matravers asserts that it has nothing to do with the reality of the fiction; as an example, he uses *Gulliver’s Travels* where the fictive world obviously is not realistic but the actual narration tells the story in such a way that the fact of its unreality does not disturb the “phenomenological whole”

of our experience (45).

Matravers also spends time trying to explain the complexity of characters addressing the audience in film and theatre. He calls this common experience “disconcerting” (50). An excellent example of this is one particular scene in cinema, when Harriet Andersson’s character Monika looks right into the camera for an extended time in Ingmar Bergman’s *Sommaren med Monika* [Summer with Monika] (1953). It happens only this time and it occurs totally unexpectedly since there is nothing in the film’s form or style (nor in the history of cinema at this point) prior to this that accentuates even the slightest possibility of meta-film. This gaze, when it occurs in the end of the film, made a deeply emotional impact on me. We have seen how Monika deserts her husband and child and is unfaithful with another man while her husband is working in another city to support the family. We have judged her morally (the American title of the film was *Monika: A Story of a Bad Girl*) but simultaneously been aroused by her sensuality and explicit nakedness earlier. This gaze into the audience does not only break the illusion of being “safe” as a voyeur in the cinema but also challenges our moral depiction of her. It is obviously a break against the illusion, but is it a break with the simulation as well? I would say no. It certainly violates the game of simulation, but like Matravers argues, games of make-believe “can absorb violations provided they do not become prevalent” (51). Furthermore, the violation is still in the way it forces the audience to interact with the character of Monika, part of the fictive world of Monika and the diegetic world of the film. Matravers raises an important question: “If it is fictional that we are looking at the characters in a drama, why is it seldom fictional that they are looking at us?” (51). The normal response would be that it violates the rules of the game: in this case the rules of the classic cinema where actors are never

allowed to look into the camera and where the audience should not be engaged in the actual film-making props. We do not have to exaggerate the role of conventions; surely there are many cases where violations of the illusion do not interfere with the fictive simulation as long as these violations are not too frequent and as long as they are connected in some way with the fiction *per se*.

So if we are agreeing on the fact that meta-aspects do not need to interfere neither with our simulations nor with the cordiality of emotional experiences, is there any necessity to be cautious about meta-fiction? I think so, in two instances. One is that even though an aspect of fiction violates the sense of a whole in an experience (the whole work of art) it does *not* mean that this actual event cannot create an emotional, isolated reaction in an audience. This is something we will look into further in the section about fiction and mood below. The second one is more complicated and not yet addressed by critics: does meta-fiction account for other types of emotional responses than the traditional realistic fiction?

One of the main reasons why Hollywood so long persisted in keeping a film style that favoured dramatic story telling and neglected the initiatives of the more experimental film communities was that they believed that this very style was the foundation of creating the emotions (sentimentality, excitement, and spectacle) they aimed at. This was especially true in preserving the classic film rules of continuity. The feelings they aimed for belong to what Carroll returns to as “garden-variety feelings” and include at least two of the body genres, melodrama and horror. When Hollywood had to adapt to the younger audiences’ growing interest in European art cinema in the 1970s, the film style changed rapidly together with the emotional range favoured by the audience. Instead of melodrama there should be

political and intellectual analysis of contemporary American issues such as the Vietnam War, the violent and imperial past, the situation of the youth, or the complications of capitalism. The change of emotional interests and film style was not a coincident but a parallel and natural shift. The classic Western by John Ford aimed at feelings such as heroism, fear (of Indians), and awe of the small man in the big world. The anti-genre films, such as Robert Altman's *McCabe and Mrs. Miller* (1971), allowed the only real cowboy in the film to be shot in the back in a snowy outpost of the western trail with Leonard Cohen's deep, anti-genre voice on the soundtrack. Instead of heroism, disgust was expressed. Perhaps the shift of emotions was one from "garden-variety emotions" to more complex emotions and emotions that needed a more active audience involvement in terms of cognitive behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

A similar change can be observed in the transition from realistic literary fiction, through modernism and into postmodernism. The feelings for Charles Dicken's *Oliver Twist* certainly do not resemble the feelings one might have for Samuel Beckett's Malone or Josef K. in Kafka's *Der Prozeß* [*The Trial*] (1925). Realism awakens one set of feelings, closely related to how it favours representation: the plot and fate of its characters. Expressionism and perhaps modernism in general, addresses more existential emotions through its explorations of interior landscapes. Futurism aims at awe. Postmodernism exhibits feelings closely related to irony, humour, and more autobiographical or cultural associations due to its preference for ontological issues. The meta-aspects so often found in postmodern literature, what Ron Sukenick calls "suspension of belief" (99), distracts the imaginative simulation process, but it does not mean that it is emotionless. An example that echoes the gaze in

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<sup>12</sup> For further reading about the change of classical Hollywood into new Hollywood see the appropriate chapters "Hollywood in Transition: 1946-1965" and "The New Hollywood: 1966 – 1978" in Gerald Mast's *A Short History of the Movies*.

*Sommaren med Monika* is John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969).

What seems at the beginning a quite ordinary "Victorian" tale turns out in the end to be a book not only about the characters Charles and Sarah but also about writing, about fictive characters, about the customs and morals of the Victorian age and how they have been presented. Does the interfering narrator, when he flips the coin for the future of his fictive character really alter our emotions towards Charles and Sarah? I argue that the emotions we had until this event are already experienced and the fact that perhaps this intrusive narrator forces us to revalue them does not nullify them. Our emotional capacity does not die because of the narrator's comments. We have probably grown to care for these characters and share their interests and will continue to do so even though we are offered several different endings. The intrusion on the simulation might even provide other emotions that would not have been addressed otherwise.

My point is that there is no need to value emotions in art in terms of either quality or quantity in regards to whether we are engaged into a full imaginative simulation or one that is disrupted once or more. It is important how the different narrative strategies can aim at different emotional registers, which may also overlap. The simulation model works best with plot and characters and addresses the "garden-variety emotions" whereas other more complex narratives might engage us in more external and complex sets of emotions since the degree of cognitivism is higher as well as our personal engagement with and to the narration.

### **Subjectivity and Simulation**

The need to involve psychological factors in the emotional experience of art, such as the audience's "actual psychological makeup, attitudes, interests,

values, prejudices, hang-ups [...]” (Walton, “Spelunking, Simulation, and Slime” 47), is evident as we have seen in our section about the problem of experience. This need is given topical interest among theorists of art and emotions, just like in Walton’s own works, but never seems to be taken into account when discussing the experience of simulation.

Gregory Currie suggests that the subjective difference of experience is “not easily accounted for on a simulation model” (74). Currie, as well as Walton and Carroll (Walton, “Spelunking, Simulation, and Slime” 39; Carroll, “Art, Narrative, and Emotion” 204), addresses an important issue; if the belief is that the simulation model captures the audience and enrolls them in a fictive imagination, there seems to be little room for introspection or other experiences to determine the emotional impact of an experience of art. Currie’s solution, and one with which I agree, is that “our emotional responses to fiction are not, after all, entirely a matter of simulation. Simulation might be the primary or triggering factor, but other factors may play a role” (74). Currie especially emphasizes the role memory plays together with simulation, how art triggers our own autobiographical memories and creates a variety of more or less intensive emotional experiences (74-75). For example, persons A and B cry when Catherine dies in the end of Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). Person A is responding to the narrative and plot, and the loss of a fictive character. This happens to person B as well but enhancing the feeling of sadness and grief is the autobiographical fact that person B’s own wife died in childbirth a few years earlier. In this case both person A and B share the emotional impact of sadness and grief but in a variety of intensities. Both emotional reactions, though, are triggered by the fictive story through simulation.

However, it is less common that there is something specific and

particular in the narrative that triggers an autobiographical memory, a detail or scene that would pass unnoticed by another person with a different background. Maybe an ordinary fictive scene that takes place in a boarding school triggers memories of being in a boarding school which as a consequence triggers emotional reactions of anger over how one was treated by the staff at boarding school. This example differs from the one with *Farewell to Arms* in that it is not triggered by a commonly shared emotional expression in the narrative through simulation. From an analytical perspective, such subjective experiences are difficult to study or even incorporate in any theory of emotions and art. When there is a sense of consensus in an audience (either through reviews, diaries, or critical studies) that many people have the same emotional experience, it would also prove valid to say that this text creates a possible emotional experience in the audience (or at least the audience when this emotional consensus was proven). The key word is *possibility*, since we can never guarantee such a response. But I would also like to use the word *possibility* in an extended sense. Is it not possible that certain narratives, styles, and forms can trigger personal memory in a higher degree and thus be isolated and analyzed?

### **Fiction and Mood**

Since we already have moved away from the hegemony of the simulation model, let us look at how differently mood operates in fiction compared to that of emotion. In this section we will conjoin moods with aesthetics.

Moods are “typically less intense and more chronic than emotions” (*The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* 35). They are also less bound to the intentionality we find in emotions. We have all experienced a sense of feeling sad without really knowing why or finding a rational cause

for it. The more subconscious nature of mood, which includes a lesser intensity but prolonged feeling, is a sign of a less cognitive state. Although not recognizable, certainly there is some cause that motivates the mood. We can also suppose that a mood can become an emotion when a person becomes aware of why and what he is feeling.

Mood, then, is less cognitive than emotion, and therefore it is less confined within the whole of a work of art and more of an episodic sort of affective response.<sup>13</sup> The non-cognitive affective experience in literature is something that Matravers claims to be of considerably higher importance than the usual cognitive models. He methodically departs from the cognitive model to what he calls the *arousal model*: the position that most of our feelings through art are less conscious and cognitive than the current theoretical body believes. The weakness of Matravers' analysis is that when he discusses cognitive emotions he uses examples from literature and film, which are highly narrative art forms. However, when he enters the stage of arousals he instead uses music primarily as an example. Much more interesting, but of course more difficult, would be if he would look into narrative art with his arousal theory. He shares a common deficiency with other critics: the preference for discussing plot and character when discussing emotions in narrative art. The reason for this is conveniently explained by Jerrold Levinson: "Emotional response to abstract art is puzzling, principally, because the strategies that provide obvious explanations of both *why* we respond emotionally, and *what* we are responding to, in the case of representational art, here seem not to be available" (27). Of course, Levinson is approaching "abstract art" and thus not considering fiction, but if we would discuss formal and stylistic matters and how we respond to them,

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<sup>13</sup> We will discuss mood more in detail in chapter two when we define nostalgic mood.



would it not be the same procedure as how we respond to abstract art?

Livingstone and Mele offer the same line of thought but in regards to fiction:

“Attempts to define the specificity of the artistic and aesthetic responses to works of fiction along purely formalist lines have been notoriously problematic [...]” (164). The details of this formalist approach are identified by Feagin as “length of sentences, vocabulary and diction, shifts in voice, recurrence of images, allusions, and juxtaposition of episodes” (58). These are surely but a few of the different formalistic and stylistic aspects of a work of fiction. More importantly, Feagin points out that they actually might play a more significant part in creating emotional responses in audiences than the more cognitive emotions considering plot and character (58).

The well-stated difficulties in recognizing how style and form address our emotions depend on a serious mistake, or limitation. The cognitive model cannot account for emotional response that is without belief (thought) and without a cognitive reaction. The cognitivists might be right in their analysis of emotion, but in that process they seem to forget that mood is also an affective state. If we talk instead about mood in relation to form and stylistics we can preserve the idea of emotion for other contexts without altering its cognitive form.

What we really are talking about is, of course, *aesthetic* responses and how they seem more sensational than cognitive. Consider William James’ description from 1890 of aesthetic emotions: “Aesthetic emotion, *pure and simple*, the pleasure given us by certain lines and masses, and combinations of colors and sounds, is an absolutely sensational experience” (468). A hundred years later, Ronald de Sousa again connects aesthetic experience with that of sensations: “Aesthetic experience has, in the classic and etymological sense of the word *aesthesis*, an essential connection with the

sensory" (182). Because sensory experiences make the emotions more subconscious and not as perceptible, they are difficult to explain. However, they might not be all subconscious either. This is argued clearly by Frank Sibley: "It is of importance to note that, broadly speaking, aesthetics deals with a kind of perception. People have to *see* the grace or unity of a work, *hear* the plaintiveness or frenzy in the music, *notice* the gaudiness of a color scheme, *feel* the power of a novel, its mood, or its uncertainty of tone" (137). The mood that is extracted from narrative discourse still needs to be perceived, and that involves a certain degree of both literary consciousness and perceptiveness in the audience.

These sudden, episodic, sensory, and more subconscious affections could seem to contradict the general idea of mood as being a longer term and less intense emotion, but modern theory about mood accounts for its extreme variety in length and intensity. It is the less cognitive state of mood that interests us and that is crucial in understanding the link between aesthetic experience and feelings, and in calling these feelings moods we create a distinct separation between cognitive emotion and sensory mood in art, or in Matravvers' words, "between the content of a work and the way the content is presented [where the] former arouse our feelings through a cognitive intermediary, the latter can arouse our feelings directly" (95). What Matravvers says is that aesthetic mood evolves as a result of the way a narrative is told. Furthermore, it seems to suggest, as noted by Charles Mauron in *Aesthetics and Psychology*, that aesthetic emotions have nothing to do with subject matter, since you can have emotions from music and that pure music has no symbols (18-19). Mauron identifies the external aspect of music when he wonders why we are "moved deeply by certain sequences of notes which arouse no suggestion of any experience in actual life" (23).

In this less cognitive emotional state it would seem that we are less likely to wander away into autobiographical memory and, as such, the aesthetic mood is less personal. This is not necessarily the case, since the aesthetic mood could also trigger autobiographical memory although in a more subconscious way. This could be seen as an analogy to that of the voluntary memory (cognitive) and involuntary memory (non-cognitive).

Aesthetic mood, then, is triggered by the discourse of narrative, in its form and style. It is less cognitive than emotions experienced through imagining or simulation. However, we must not deny that aesthetic mood also aids the process of simulation as well. It is primarily aesthetic mood that we will deal with in the rest of this thesis. I will use the general term *emotions* to include both the cognitive emotions and the aesthetic mood.

## **Towards a Method of Analyzing Emotional Response to Fiction**

### **A Direction of Research**

Due to the intensified interests in art and emotions lately, one would think that there would be several attempts to create a workable and approachable theory of how we best should utilize our new knowledge and competence in order to properly analyze our emotional responses to art. This is not the case. Walton carries his idea of the game of make-believe to its furthest limits, Currie argues for the concept of congruence (explained on page 69), and

Matravers speaks of his arousal theories. What is lacking is a more pragmatic scheme about the ways one should approach this difficult task.

We might remember Holland's schedule of analysis: first, we have to study the text objectively, and then we have to value our own subjective response to it, and last, try to connect these. Can this be a convenient structure and order to work from? The first two stages seem to be problematic in terms of an examination of the subjective emotional experience of a text. It would prove impossible to first study a text and then draw conclusions of how we respond emotionally to it. No, we have to start with our experience.

There is one pragmatic critic in the area of art and emotions though, Carroll, who suggests a "certain direction of research" in ways we should analyze a text's triggering of emotional response:

Using herself as a detector, the critic begins with a global sense of the emotions that the text has elicited in her. Then, using the criteria of the emotion in question as a hypothesis, she may review the way in which the text is articulated to isolate the relevant descriptions or depictions in the text that instantiate the concept of the emotion in question. In following this procedure, one can pith the emotive structure of the text. ("Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 207)

In all its simplicity, I generally agree on the basic structure and order of emotional analysis in texts that Carroll suggests. It seems appropriate that we start from the audience's point of view and use our own reading experience as a base for localizing the nature of the emotions that we have experienced. This is usually a straightforward process, especially when we deal with simple emotions. We then have to use the knowledge of the nature of the

specific emotion, determine what usually causes it (its object, beliefs, and direction), and evaluate how the text possibly can evoke the necessary ingredients of the emotion. The last stage of the analysis will be the most burdensome, and before we supply an example of how such an analysis could be performed, we have to present the different relationships between author, text, and audience and assess where our focus has to be.

### **The Different Emotional Reactions to Art**

It would be appropriate now to summarize the rather long and winding road through the arduous landscape of art and emotions. We will do so by trying to categorize the different emotive relationships between author, text, and audience. This categorization is much in debt to the one William Lyons proposes in relation to painter-painting-viewer in “On Looking into Titian’s *Assumption*” (143).

The major head categories do not purport that in all instances there are different degrees of interaction between them. Even category 4, which is sorted under the heading of “text,” would be pointing both at the author in terms of how he is aware of the conventions involved and to the audience having to interpret these conventions in order to activate the emotional expression. I also use the word “emotion” when I am actually talking of both emotions and moods.

#### **Author**

1 – Author produces text during an emotional state where the text is the direct consequence of this emotional state.

2 – Author produces text in or after an emotional state

where the text expresses the same emotions as the artist felt at a certain time.

3 – Author produces a text that expresses emotions that are not the artist's own.

### **Text (Representation)**

4 – Emotions are clearly expressed in the text either by use of manifested conventions or common clichés.

5 – Emotions are expressed through simulation (identification).

6 – Emotions are expressed through our response to fictive characters.

### **Text (Aesthetics)**

7 – Emotions are expressed through metaphors and symbols.

8 – Emotions are expressed through narrative discourse.

9 – Emotions are expressed through style and form.

### **Audience**

10 – Audience experience emotions through the text that are part of the fictive world (diegetic) and also in line with the author's intentions.

11 – Audience experience emotions through the text that are part of the fictive world (diegetic) but *not* in line with the author's intentions.

12 – Audience experience emotions through the text that are *not* part of the fictive world (non-diegetic) but in line with the author's intentions.

13 – Audience experience emotions through the text that are *not* part of the fictive world (non-diegetic) and *not* in line with the author's intentions.

**14** – Audience experience emotions through the text in correlation with extra-textual knowledge.

### **Non-Textual**

**15** – Audience experience emotions not through the text but the actual experience.

### **Author**

*1 – Author produces text during an emotional state where the text is the direct consequence of this emotional state.*

In this case the author is producing the art in a state of affect with less cognitive awareness and more of an intuitive approach. This is more common in non-representational art, but could include, for example, surrealist auto-writing.

*2 – Author produces text in or after an emotional state where the text expresses the same emotions as the artist felt at a certain time.*

Much more common than (1) is when the author tries to capture his own emotions, but in a more distanced way and transfers them into the art.

*3 – Author produces a text that expresses emotions that are not the artist's own.*

It is not unusual that an author sets out to convey a certain emotion which is not his own, in order to manipulate his audience or to work within a certain genre or convention.

### **Text (Representation)**

*4 – Emotions are clearly expressed in the text either by use of manifested conventions or common clichés.*

This refers to the common cultural language between author and audience

where the emotional content is easily identified in the text through certain cultural and aesthetic conventions and clichés. The commonly used mother with child that is threatened by the enemy is a typical such example from war propaganda films.

*5 – Emotions are expressed through simulation (identification).*

If we are engaged in fictive simulation, and thus believe we are in danger when a character in the fiction also is in danger, we talk about emotions that are conveyed through simulations. Identification does not only mean with characters but also with situations, and is due to the narrative strategies employed such as the focalization of narration and narrative mood. Different kinds of *verfremdungs*-techniques obstruct this kind of identification.

*6 – Emotions are expressed through our response to fictive characters.*

This category is very close to (5) but regards cases where our emotions are directed more directly towards characters, most common in terms of sympathy and empathy, but also less commonly in terms of disgust and hatred. The strongest reaction might be one of strong sadness or sorrow if a fictive character we learned to like suddenly dies.

**Text (Aesthetics)**

*7 - Emotions are expressed through metaphors and symbols.*

Even though there might be debate whether metaphors and symbols are representational or not, I have decided to put them in the category of aesthetics. This category is more constrained within the cultural *milieu* it exhibits than other categories.



*8 – Emotions are expressed through narrative discourse.*

Close to (5) this exhibits cases when the formalistic devices are more central than that of actual representation.

*9 – Emotions are expressed through style and form.*

When emotions are triggered through the use of specific stylistics such as syntax, grammar, tenses, rhythm, and meter, they fall within this category.

## **Audience**

Categories 10 and 11 are quite self-explanatory.

*12 – Audience experience emotions through the text that are not part of the fictive world (non-diegetic) but in line with the author's intentions.*

This is an important category because it is rarely mentioned in theoretical work. There are instances when one suspects that even though the emotional experience is outside the fictive world (that is personal/autobiographical emotion), it is triggered intentionally by the author through the text.

Consequently, there are ways for an author to trigger non-diegetic emotions by using either standard formulas or culturally appropriate and shared devices and clichés.

*13 - Audience experience emotions through the text that are not part of the fictive world (non-diegetic) and not in line with the author's intentions.*

The result of (13) is the same as (12) but impossible to trace to any specific author technique or intention. This category is so private that it is uninteresting in terms of emotional textual analysis.

*14 – Audience experience emotions through the text in correlation with extra-textual knowledge.*

As we have seen, there are bountiful of instances where our experience of the text is influenced by knowledge of the author, the text's publication history, criticism, opinions, and advertisements. This category is a useful part of our *competent reader* when analyzing a text.

### **Non-Textual**

*15 – Audience experience emotions not through the text but the actual experience.*

This category contains those experiences that are not related to the actual text but more to the experience of art and its externalities, thus also not interesting in terms of textual analysis.

### **The Death of the Author and Birth of the Narrator**

We have been speaking of fiction in terms of experience thus far because the focus of our study is the subjective experience of emotions that are evoked by fiction; this has had the consequence that we more or less have ignored the role of the author and ignored the first three categories in the above scheme. The focus on the text and reader seems the appropriate one. "The statements authors make about the process of composition," writes Culler, "are notoriously problematic, and there are few ways of determining what they are taking for granted. Whereas the meanings readers give to literary works and the effects they experience are much more open to observation" (105). Culler, in concordance with our focus, emphasizes text, reader and experience. A similar line of thought is presented by Linda Hutcheon in *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (1994). Since the experience of irony, similarly to that of emotions, is subjective, what are Hutcheon's

strategies to handle the intentions of the author? Hutcheon is very clear in dividing her study of irony into three interacting aspects since they are “dynamic and plural relations among the text or utterance [...] the so-called ironist, the interpreter, and the circumstances surrounding the discursive situation [...]” (11). She questions the usual assumption, that the ironist’s intentions are central, and that there is only one way to interpret irony – the intended one. Her first chapter is, appropriately, titled “Risky Business,” since this presumption is rather risky. She points out that there is never a guarantee that the interpreter will interpret a text just like the author wishes (11). Nevertheless, if an interpreter is experiencing irony, then there must be irony for that interpreter. Since her focus is more on the contextual and social aspects of irony, the “scene” of irony and not ironic poetics specifically, she is not committed to exclude the authorial or contextual aspects altogether. Perhaps Hutcheon’s attitude not to abandon the author altogether is wise. Even though the author plays a very little role in our actual experience, it does not mean that we cannot gain further knowledge in our analysis if we keep an open mind about the author. Let us look into our possibilities.

Despite scepticism towards studying the author, there is a general idea that communication between a real author and reader can be successful and that the author can manage to communicate the set of emotions he sets out to communicate. Livingstone and Mele write that “authors usually have settled on at least some broad outlines with regard to the kinds of emotions they want to produce in a target audience [...]” (169) and Carroll proposes that authors “are able, fairly reliably, to induce the emotions they set out to evoke – especially basic emotions (like anger, fear, hatred, and so on) [...]” (“Art, Narrative, and Emotion” 205). Carroll later puts his own idea in scrutiny when he refers to how Brett Easton Ellis with *American Psycho* expected his

audience to “respond with hilarity – because he intended a postmodern parody – whereas they greeted the book with disgust” (“Art, Narrative, and Emotion” 205). Carroll calls such cases “rare,” but I do not think they are that rare. It seems often enough that artists complain about being misunderstood or misinterpreted. Even though these miscommunications do occur, they are rare enough in order to suppose an often fulfilled intention by the author. And even if there is no consensus between author and audience, our knowledge about these intentions might actually influence our experience. For example, if we knew that Ellis aimed for parody, this knowledge might have influenced our reading as such. Likewise, we are influenced by critics, media, friends, and extensive knowledge of the author and the cultural and aesthetic contemporary ideas, all which might influence our artistic experience. If we know that the author was murdered recently this might give us another experience than if we knew nothing about the author’s fate. This was the case with some of the First World War poets, whose death immediately after completing a poem sometimes added enormously to its appeal at the time.

Approaching the first three categories above that concerns our authors’ different involvements in the emotional creativity phase, it seems probable that we could draw conclusions about what it is in the text (if this has been the intent of the author) that triggers our emotions. Even though we have cases like *American Psycho*, we also have cases like Stephen King’s *The Shining* where one of the author’s aims obviously was to scare the audience, which evidently succeeded. What can we do with an extended knowledge like this? We could ask Stephen King about his writing and efforts to create a scary narrative, but more often than not such information is disappointing since there is much intuitive work among authors. Perhaps we could gain

some insights into his techniques through interviews or reading *On Writing*, his book about fiction. Or we could skim through his oeuvre in order to crystallize some recurring motifs and stylistic devices. These all belong to knowledge that a reader can bring with him into textual analysis, and even though it is not worthless, it probably will not bring that much assistance into the analytical process. I suppose, since collecting evidence of emotional experiences in audiences is notoriously difficult, we could use this evidence of communication as proof that a certain style actually triggers specific emotions.

If we look beyond an authors' emotional background, it can still be useful. We could put Stephen King into a cultural context of late 1970s America when he wrote *The Shining*. What were the cultural determinators from that time and place and how are they reflected in his style? What kind of conventions and clichés are being used in order to convey certain emotions? Can we compare King with other authors of fiction from the same time? What scared people in the 1970s? These questions belong to that of the competent reader (see next section), but are less exclusively connected to the author and more to cultural contexts.

Livingstone and Mele come to the peculiar conclusion that "readers need not and should not make assessments about a work's expressive features by means of speculations about a fictional author's attitudes. Instead, they should assess the textual evidence directly, making inferences about the real author's expressive aims" (167). On the whole, I think what is really interesting, contrary to Livingstone and Mele, is to study narrative discourse – the role of the narrator, whether implied or not.

If we think of fiction as simulation, the narrator is in charge of this simulation, and thus plays a significant part in our experience. We have seen

briefly in the section about meta-fiction, how an intrusive narrator can change our emotional outcome. Instead of talking about how the feelings of the real author influence the text, it makes more sense to speak of how the narrator's feelings influence the text. "Hence, if the representation is sad," writes Matravers, "it simply follows that the narration is sad. A natural interpretation of the narration's being sad is that it is narrated sadly. The narrator's emotions do not need to be explicit, hence the cognitivist's solution cannot be refuted by showing that there are cases of expression in which no trace of the narrator's emotion can be found" (96). Matravers distinguishes that the emotions do not only spill over into pure representation but also into the narrative's style and form. Style and form are an inevitable consequence of the discourse of the narrative. Matravers then would claim that emotions are primarily expressed in the narrative style rather than in the suspected emotions *in* the narrator which a cognitivist such as Gregory Currie believes. For Currie, fictional emotions are connected strongly to the emotional state of the narrator through what he calls *congruence*: "the work is expressive of an emotion just in case it provides evidence that the fictional author experienced that emotion" (*The Nature of Fiction* 214). This attitude, as Matravers identifies, creates problems when we are dealing with narrators that are not explicitly expressive, or are unreliable. It is better then to avoid the emotional status of the narrator and focus on the expressiveness of the narration (which of course is connected to what kind of narrator is used).

To avoid misunderstandings, let us at the very beginning clarify an important and now accepted distinction: in narrative fiction there is a difference between the real author and the narrator. If we see fiction as a report of events, this report is narrated by someone. Using Gérard Genette's terminology we are dealing with what he refers to as a narrative's *voice*. A

narrator can be either *heterodiegetic* (one that stands outside the world he is reporting about) or *homodiegetic* (a character in the narrative). Furthermore, Genette divides narrators into *extradiegetic* (narrator in the first degree) and *intradiegetic* (narrator in the second degree) (248). This gives us four different general types of narrators and a table like this:

Table1. Different types of narrators.

<b>NARRATORS</b>	<b>Level:</b>	Extradiegetic	Intradiegetic
<b>Relationship:</b>			
Heterodiegetic		Chaucer (Canterbury Tales)	The Knight (Canterbury Tales)
Homodiegetic		Nick Carraway	Jay Gatsby

Chaucer is the main narrator of a narrative he is not part of. He is what is usually called *an implied author*. But within that narrative (the first narrative) the Knight will tell “A Knight’s Tale” (second narrative), a narrative in which the Knight is not a part. In *The Great Gatsby* the main narrator of the first narrative is Nick Carraway who also happens to be one of the characters of the narrative he narrates. But within that narrative there is a section which is a memory clearly narrated by one of the characters, Jay Gatsby, a second narrative in which he takes part himself. When it comes to the extradiegetic and heterodiegetic narrator, in this case Chaucer, it is easy to confuse this narrator with the real author when they are, in fact, the same person. The important distinction is that we have to separate the beliefs, ideas, and emotional strata from the real author and that of the hetero- extradiegetic narrator. If we look at *The Great Gatsby*, we find numerous negative attitudes towards Jews, attitudes we normally do not point to as being Fitzgerald’s

view on the topic. One of the reasons we do not do this is because in the case of *The Great Gatsby*, the extradiegetic narrator happens to be homodiegetic: Nick Carraway is a fictional character in the story he narrates. Therefore it is a simple task to make Nick responsible for any negative attitudes towards Jews rather than the actual author, Fitzgerald. This is an easy case, but it becomes more complicated if we are dealing with an extradiegetic narrator that is heterodiegetic, because this means, usually, that the real author and the narrator is one and the same person. Stig Larsson's controversial novel, *Komedin I*, is about a man who is sexually attracted by young pre-pubescent girls. The real author, Stig Larsson, is also the extradiegetic narrator but stands outside his narrative. It would be absurd to presume that Stig Larsson shares the sentiments of his protagonist; however, this is not an uncommon presumption. Stig Larsson the narrator might very well believe in the story he narrates, narrating it with the full force of paedophilic imagery to make the narrative believable. But the author Stig Larsson might actually find the narrative and its characters revolting. The reason for confusing an extradiegetic narrator with the real author is probably one reason why most controversial novels usually apply a homodiegetic narrator as the extradiegetic narrator. Nabokov allows Humpert Humpert to narrate his *Lolita* and Burgess creates a distance from himself as an author and the ultra violence he portrays in *A Clockwork Orange* by using Alex as a narrator.

Even if the author is not an explicit part of our experience, awareness of his role, his style, and his cultural context should be part of our analysis and of our competent reader. Just like Roland Barthes argues in "La mort de l'auteur" ["Death of the Author"] (1968), the internal aspects of the work are more important than the external. In defining poetics we are into literary criticism *not* literary biography. Nevertheless, if we are to be confident in our



theory, and also influential on others, it might prove necessary to bring into the analytical methods a certain awareness of the specific author's style or recurring literary strategies. More meaningful, though, is to closely examine the actual narration and the mood and voice of the narrator.

### **The Competent Reader**

Even though we accept the subjective experience as a valid experience for analysis, which is more or less how we interpret and analyze fiction both in theoretical works and criticism, it is convenient to explore a possible way of creating a theoretical reader that can be useful in order to analyze emotional responses to art. We need a reader theory that brings in both the subjective experience and a set of rules that also makes this experience valid in a wider critical context. In short, it is finally time to address the problem of experience.

Many speak of an informed reader of some kind, such as Culler's "competent reader," Umberto Eco's "model reader," or Riffaterre's "superreader." What these theorists have in common is the belief that in order to grasp the literary experience, we need to construct a reader that has some kind of literary competence in order to expose the meanings of the texts. Therefore, naturally, there is a sense of validation in the meaning of texts, and a belief that the texts contain something that a competent reader will decipher into an experience.

Culler's much debated concept about literary competence, is an expansion of Noam Chomsky's "linguistic competence." When Chomsky talks about an inner grammar he means fundamental linguistic knowledge, often unconscious, in people to understand language. Culler's extension means that we also have a set of rules that we have to learn in order to make

the most of our literary experiences. It is not clear how this competence is working, nor how we perceive it, but it opens up a spectrum of questions as to how the reader's background and knowledge interacts with the reading experience. According to Culler, a work "has structure and meaning because it is read in a particular way, because these potential properties, latent in the object itself, are actualized by the theory of discourse applied in the act of reading" (102). This means, frankly, that there is a rather limited way of perceiving the work, or at least, there is a more legitimate way to do it.

Eco's approach is more semantic in that he proposes a dialectic theory of how the author has to choose his model reader when he is writing, a model reader who will be able to reconstruct the ideas of the writer when he wrote the text (*The Role of the Reader* 8). The selections available to the writer are several: the choice of language, encyclopaedic knowledge, a conscious choice of a lexical and stylistic heritage, genre expectations, and the geographical place of the narrative (7). It is not a one-directional communication; the author does have expectations of his own model reader that the text itself, if fortunate, will bring out if the reader chooses to engage in the text.

Riffaterre's super-reader is an analytical tool that is built up of all possible knowledge that can be gathered about a specific text and its contexts, much in the manner of the hermeneutic circle of Hans Robert Jauss. This has to be done to fully grasp the possibilities of a "correct" reading. However, his reading differs from that of Jauss, Levis-Strauss, or Roman Jakobson, in that this competence should still be used according to how a reader meets the text – in a chronological order of successive events and impressions. Riffaterre's super-reader of Baudelaire's "Les Chats" is composed of,

Baudelaire (correction of line 8, placing the sonnet, in the ensemble of the collection); Gautier (his long paraphrasis of the sonnet, in his preface to the third edition of the *Fleurs*), and Laforgue (some echoes in *Sanglot de la Terre*, “La Première Nuit”); the translations of W. Fowlie, F. L. Freedman and F. Duke; as many critics as I could find, the more useful being those whose reason for picking out a line had nothing to do with the sonnet; Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss for those points in the text where they deviate from their method [...]; Larousse’s *Dictionnaire du XIXème Siècle* for the entries which quote the sonnet; philological or textbook footnotes; informants such as students of mine and other souls whom fate has thrown my way. (38)

It entails most of what is usually expected when doing a textual close reading, but where the novelty lies is in how to handle the reading experience.

Both Iser and Fish seem to give more autonomy to the reader, and as such they partly depart from the idea of the competent reader, although they do not dismiss that the qualities of a competent reader can indeed also be found in a normal reader, and that competence alters the reading experience.

Fish is definitely more radical in his methods, since he validates the literary experience from an actual reader, that of the critic. His warning that “[t]he objectivity of the text is an illusion [...]” (82) forces us into the deeper subjectivity among the psycho-analytics such as Holland and Bleich. He is defending the subjective reading by stating that if there is one particular reading, there must be others as well that can identify with this reading: “When I talk about the responses of ‘the reader,’ am I not really talking about myself, and making myself into a surrogate for all the millions of readers who are not me at all? Yes and no. Yes in the sense that in no two of us are

the responding mechanisms exactly alike. No, if one argues that because of the uniqueness of the individual, generalization about response is impossible" (83). Iser refers to the idea of competence, and defines, also, a competent reader as one who is "a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built up," "is in full possession of 'the semantic knowledge that a mature [...] listener brings to his task of comprehension,'" and "has *literary* competence" (86-87). He continues to validate the findings of one competent reader, since "[w]hat happens to one informed reader of a work will happen, within a range of nonessential variation, to another. It is only when readers become literary critics and the passing of judgment takes precedence over the reading experience, that opinions begin to diverge" (89). In short, experiences are alike, but the valuation of them differs. How does this differ from the other theorists' ideas about the competent reader? Culler is very well aware of the problems and shares Fish's central perspective of how an experience of a text does not vary that much: "The critic would not write unless he thought he had something new to say about a text, yet he assumes that his reading is not a random and idiosyncratic phenomenon" (112). Fish's difference lies more in method and tone than factuality. First of all, the competence is not used to value literature, but to describe it (88). Fish is not creating a super-reader, an artificial creation, but wants a reader, a real person, to achieve necessary talents about a work and style, and then describe his reading experience. Importantly, he also acknowledges that the competence a reader brings in depends on what century or period the reading is performed (85). He seems, then, resistant to Culler's idea of how the reading has to be within the conformation of the institution of literature (Culler 111).

Iser's reader is a co-creator, whose participation in the game of the text is crucial in creating meaning. The reading experience, thus, is two-fold: one is still dependent on the superiority of the text and fulfils what the text intends, and the other experience is the reader's own imagination at work, filling in the text's mysteries or gaps. So, in the end, the reader is still very much the slave of the text. Iser's term for this dialectic reader is *implied reader* where he attempts to solve the key problem of how to have both an intended reception and a subjective one. Iser divides the reader's role into two aspects, one "as a textual structure" and another as "a structured act" (*The Act of Reading* 35). The role of textual structure comprises how the author's intentions are realized through the structure and surface of the text. This means that there is *a way* to interpret the text; that the text more or less forces the reader to experience the text in a certain way. Iser sees this more as a dialectic aspect, since the reader's textual role is carved into three pieces: "the different perspectives represented in the text, the vantage point from which he joins them together, and the meeting place where they converge" (*The Act of Reading* 36). This aspect of reading diminishes a huge variety of interpretations, but still allows a certain freedom in the meeting between author and reader through the text. This meeting is then played out against the structured act, where the textual reading *affects* the reader, and creates mental images (*The Act of Reading* 36).

The advantage of Iser's method is that he provides a set of tools to understand certain aspects of how a text manipulates a reader into a specific experience. His division of the reader into "textual" and "structural" allows us to incorporate the structural way a text creates meaning and emotion, but also how these possibilities – or in Iser's term "*potentials*" (*The Act of Reading* 18) – are realized through the subjective interpretation of the reader.

This has been a survey of some ideas about the competent reader. We will not at this point with accuracy define our own competent reader although we should keep in mind some of the above notions. Our competent reader will grow out of our needs as established later in this chapter.

### Theory in Practice

Let us recall Carroll's structure of analysis of emotions in literature:

Using herself as a detector, the critic begins with a global sense of the emotion that the text has elicited in her. Then, using the criteria of the emotion in question as a hypothesis, she may review the way in which the text is articulated to isolate the relevant descriptions or depictions in the text that instantiate the concept of the emotion in question. In following this procedure, one can pith the emotive structure of the text. ("Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 207)

We can now put this structure into practice, together with the ideas about the competent reader.

In John Ford's Western classic *Stagecoach* (1939) one scene shows an alcoholic doctor, a prostitute, a woman with a newly born child, a gambler, a business man, and an outlaw travelling through Arizona in a stagecoach. They are suddenly attacked by Apache Indians. It is a long action sequence in high tempo when the people in the stagecoach try to defend themselves against the ravaging Indians. Let us say that, during this sequence, we feel a variety of emotions: awe, excitement, fear, disgust, anger, and that we now want to analyze *why* we experience these particular emotions. Awe and excitement are basically due to the sequence's rapid cutting techniques, high tempo, daring camera angles, use of subjective perspectives, extended use of

close ups in order to emphasize speed but also to infuse a certain spatial confusion in the viewer. Furthermore, the sequence is accompanied by an intensive sound effects track. As we can see, these emotions are mainly created by non-narrative aspects of the film. Disgust, fear, and anger are closely related, and their object is, of course, the Apache Indians. When we first see them they are filmed up on a hill from a low camera angle in order to reinforce their power and meanness. These repeated images are accompanied with an atonal sound that amplifies their inhumanity. There is no sense of individuals among them; they are clearly just a bunch, a *them*. This is then contrasted with the characters in the stagecoach whom we might have developed feelings for. As I stated, they are *a* doctor, *a* gambler, etc., and it is easy to identify oneself with them and their situation. They have no unfinished business with the Indians; they just want to get to the next town with the mother and the newborn child. They become a *we*. This is a typical emotional situation that has been used in propaganda films ever since the start of the film medium: how films create a clearly defined *we* and *them*. Stylistically this identification is strengthened by shooting many shots from within the claustrophobic stage coach, showing close ups of the scared women and the little child. These shots are contrasted with a few long shots that present how little and vulnerable the stage coach is in this unfriendly eternal desert covered with avenging Indians. According to the nature of the emotion fear, it has to be fear of *something* (likewise with anger) – in this case it is fear *of* and anger *at* the Indians. In the very end of this sequence, before they are rescued by the US cavalry and when it seems like they are losing, the gambler points his gun towards the mother and is about to shoot her in order to protect her from whatever nastiness the savages have in mind for her. Death certainly is better than a fate in a tipi. In this instance, fear and

anger dissolve into disgust for the way the Indians live and for what they might do to our honourable women, not to mention the poor, pure, white, little new born baby.

In following the general order of Carroll's scheme, I have first identified my emotions and then tried through an analysis of the scene to distinguish what it is in the filmic text that has evoked these emotions. Looking at the text, I have identified both aesthetic and narrative values; sometimes they have worked together in order to create my simulation. For example, the different camera angles and subjective cameras have drawn me into the action, forced me to identify with the people in the stage coach and therefore aided my simulation.

However, any reader receptive to irony cannot have missed how my analytical description hints that I did not really feel the way I was *supposed* to do. In fact I did not; the above was just a hypothetical scenario. I do feel awe, but this is perhaps more an awe for the creativity of the film makers and how they managed to create such an action scene in the late 1930s when cameras were bulky and not very movable. I definitely feel anger and disgust, but not at the Indians. The simplified propagandistic way of creating sympathy for white heroes and hatred for the Native Americans disgusts me. The Native Apaches die like flies, impersonal deaths en masse, not to mention the poor horses that constantly fall in the dust. The standard of classic Hollywood disgusts me as well in its way of appealing to emotions rather than intellect. Likewise, the views of Natives as a barbaric and savage people (with its atonal music) who only tried to defend their country and their way of life, disgusts me.

My hypothetical viewer seems to be more identical to the viewers of cinema in 1939, whereas my real viewer is loaded with postcolonial theory



and film history and looking back from a more recent perspective. This problem, if it is a problem, is addressed by Carroll:

Of course, in many cases, especially those in which we as ordinary readers are dealing with texts that are remote from us in time and place, we will not be able to depend on our own emotional responses to the text because we do not have the appropriate cultural background. This is exactly where literary history, film history, art history, dance history, and the like have an indispensable role to play. For historians can supply us with the background necessary to make the emotive address of texts from other cultures and other periods in the history of our own culture emotionally accessible to us. ("Art, Narrative, and Emotion" 208)

In order to be able to qualify as an interpreter of contemporary emotional responses, in case the contemporary is sought after, we need a competent reader. The competent reader has to pay attention to how different genres generate different meanings, an issue Culler identifies: "The operations will, of course, be different for different genres. [...] The same sentence can have a different meaning depending on the genre in which it appears" (116). We have to be aware of what Iser calls the "repertoire" of the literary texts, and how they perform according to not only "social and cultural norms" but also "elements and, indeed, whole traditions of past literature that are mixed together with these norms" (*The Act of Reading* 79). Our horizon is not the same as when the texts were written, but through a competent reading, we are able to recognize the expectations of the contemporary readers. Just like the critics of the Reader-Response school, I do believe that *my* competent reading will prove to be other peoples' reading, within a certain variety. In order to encompass the variety of readers, their subjective and cultural

diversity, it is best to speak of how a particular style, structure or simulation creates the possibilities, or *potentials*, of such an experience.

### **A Method of Analyzing Emotional Experiences in Fiction**

We have now decided that the focus of analyzing an emotional response to art has to be based on the actual qualities of the emotion that is activated through our first reading experience. We will then focus on the text and the experience in order to understand *why* this is happening. We will use a competent reader to widen our horizon and to incorporate the different cultural and subjective determinators involved. Our interest in the author is minimal, which dismisses the first three categories of the relation between author-text-audience (see page 60) and diminishes the use of category 14, but the mood and voice of the actual narration remains essential. Likewise, the extreme personal reactions such as in categories 13 and 15 will be banished. Autobiographical emotions are interesting *if* we can see that they are triggered meaningfully and intentionally through the text. Finally, we will talk about a text's potential to create a certain specific emotional response in an audience, in order to reserve ourselves from making strict constitutional laws for emotional experiences. Studying the text will be imperative through how the simulation and aesthetics work. Still, we need to further investigate if there might be a method readily available for the actual textual analysis.

When, as such a method requires, a reading is done chronologically, and great attention is paid to every detail in the text that the reader acts upon, then there is no real division in form and content, but, just as Fish declares, "everything counts and that something (analyzable and significant) is always happening [...]" (97). When Iser writes, "Whatever the size of the unit, the focus of the method remains the reader's experience of it, and the

mechanism of the method is the magic question, 'what does this — — — — — do?' ("The Reading Process" 81-82) he raises two important issues in our own method.

The first one, addressed by Iser in terms of the size of the unit, is about differentiation between the study of macro and micro units. This division is also supported by Genette (43). Emotional response can, as we have seen, be divided into emotions and moods, where emotions tend to be incorporated more into the whole of the narrative (macro) and moods more episodically (micro). The division into macro and micro units is convenient in approaching these different kinds of emotional responses since macro studies will deal more with the wider structures of the whole texts and micro studies with small stylistic devices, or handling small parts of texts. This is important, since an emotional reading experience *does not* have to be complete. It can also be partial.

The second one has to do with the focus on effect. The reader-oriented theories we will use are based mainly on Fish's and Iser's, since theirs are the ones least concerned with valuing texts. Fish writes: "My method allows for no such aesthetic and no such fixings of value. In fact it is oriented *away* from evaluation and toward description" (88). Likewise, we will not rate the way a certain text evokes a certain emotion, only demonstrate its causality and then try to establish an understanding of why this is happening. Thus, the magic question, "What does this (text) do?" has already been answered before we do our analysis: it creates a specific emotional experience in us. In that sense, our method differs from the "fresh approach" of Iser and Fish, since we know what to look for. One caution is necessary, since every reading, as Iser so well observes, is likely to change our relation to the text. A revised analysis is bound to alter the one from the first reading. This is a natural process in

reaching a deeper understanding of the mechanism behind an emotional experience, but it should not interfere with the chronology of the reading. Our re-experience will serve as an understanding of the first reading, which is the central one. Our method is still bound by a reading of a text, and therefore not a classic hermeneutic strategy.

The advantages of using the method, as it is developed by Iser and Fish, are several; conducting a method that follows closely to that of a reading makes the distance between the emotional experience and the emotional reading experience less insuperable. It also focuses on where it should focus, namely on the subjective experience of the reader. More so, “what the method does is *slow down* the reading experience so that ‘events’ one does not notice in normal time, but which do occur, are brought before our analytical attentions” (Fish 74). Both Iser and Fish supply resources that simplify the analysis. Iser’s interest in the temporalities of the reading experience, “anticipation and retrospection” (“The Reading Process” 57), is a valuable contribution to understanding narrative time. The process, of how we alter our expectations, how our expectations of characters and events change in course of reading, Iser calls “[t]he act of recreation” (“The Reading Process” 62). Iser also raises important questions about reader activation, the oscillation “between involvement in and observation of those illusions [...]” and ideas about the ways the illusory world are experienced by the reader as a reality (simulation) (“The Reading Process” 61). Furthermore, he is interested in reader identification (“The Reading Process” 65-67). Through Genette we will gain an understanding of the role of the narrator and narration, and a vocabulary to be precise in narration’s mood, voice, duration, frequency, and order.

Fish's contribution is more on the micro level, since he advocates the close reading of how stylistics alters our reading experience and emotional reactions. He shows how differently we experience a sentence. We must consider how it is rearranged in different orders, not from a point of information, but from affections: "There is no difference in these two sentences in the information conveyed (or not conveyed), or in the lexical and syntactical components, only in the way these are received. But that one difference makes *all* the difference [...]" (74).

Conclusively, we can now present a practical structure of analysis of emotional experience through literature:

**Experience of Emotion and Mood through a text**



Evaluation of the nature of this emotion/mood and how it is triggered in real life



**Study the text**

**A** – Finding correspondences between how emotions are triggered in real life and in the text

**B** – Finding out how this happens

**1** – RE-EXPERIENCE through a competent reader

**1** – MACRO (Emotions, simulation, narration)

**2** – MICRO (Mood, aesthetics, stylistics)

Fig. 2. The Experience of Emotion and Mood through a text.

This structure is then divided into the actual experience of an emotion, the analysis of the nature of the emotion, and the actual textual study through our competent reading and our re-experience of the text. This process should be used to evaluate more precisely how the specific emotion is evoked in readers. The division between macro and micro is, as mentioned before, a way of dividing the textual analysis into two approaches. The macro study focuses on how the narrative as a whole triggers the specific emotion. It will

deal more with the simulation model and the main consequences of the narration and therefore be more occupied with the cognitive aspects of emotions. The micro study will serve as close textual readings of smaller segments of texts and therefore focus more on stylistics and aesthetics as well as emotional mood. Let us begin, then, with the second part of the method: what is the nature of nostalgia?



## Chapter Two

### The Nostalgic Experience

#### Introduction

Nostalgia can be defined many ways. It can be seen as a “social disease” (Stewart ix), a falsifying component of historicism (Jameson), a literary style during Romanticism (Santesso), a way of understanding socio-psychological phenomenon in the end of nineteenth century (Simmel), an “immigrant psychosis” (Frost 801), a variant of depression (Kaplan), or part of a Freudian concept of regression (Casey). But first and foremost nostalgia is a distinct transhistorical human experience, and it is this definition that we primarily will explore in this chapter.

The particularities of the nostalgic experience are not easy to define. As Fred Davis assesses through his interviews in *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (1979), everybody seems to know what nostalgia feels like, but cannot really explain it (Davis 7). This is often the case when we enter the realm of emotions; still, it appears that there are some given regulations of what this experience consists of. It is a clash of emotions, usually described as joy and melancholia that creates a sense of the bitter-sweet. Linda Hutcheon, in “Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern,” declares that nostalgia is less perceiving and more feeling “when two different temporal moments, past and present, come together for you and, often, carry considerable emotional weight.” The joyful aspect lies in the object we long for, our remembrance or dream. The melancholia is a result of the irreversibility of time; that this “memory” is for ever gone. Although it is



accompanied with sadness, most people regard nostalgia as a fundamentally pleasant experience (Davis 14; Kaplan 465).<sup>14</sup>

There are so many ambivalences and paradoxes around the notion of nostalgia that it is necessary to try to refine the nostalgic experience as far as possible. There are two methods in doing this, and we will use both: empirical and historical. The best source of a nostalgic experience has to be personal, and the choices of sources to depend on as well as the general direction of this outline, is therefore very dependent on my own nostalgic experiences. Historical and literary accounts of nostalgia and how it has been interpreted will serve as an illuminating light on my own limitations.

Obviously, one difficulty in defining nostalgia is the way the word has changed meaning through history. Jean Starobinski is correct in "The Idea of Nostalgia" (1966) when he assumes that in "tracing the history of emotions and of mentalities, one is immediately confronted with a question of method resulting from the interplay of emotions and language" (Starobinski 81). Johannes Hofer's nostalgia from his *Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia or Homesickness* (1688) is not the same nostalgia as the one in the *Encyclopedia Britannica's* 11<sup>th</sup> edition.<sup>15</sup> The way we interpret nostalgia seems different depending what Western culture we come from; the definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary* differs slightly from the one in *Enciclopedia Treccani*, and *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie* provides yet another bearing.

With a slightly more positive tenor Karin Johannisson acknowledges, in her book *Nostalgia: en känslas historia* [Nostalgia: The History of an

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<sup>14</sup> This is further supported by Batcho (1998) and Jackson (1986). There are, however, those who consider nostalgia primarily a negative emotional experience: Best and Nelson (1985), Hertz (1990), Holbrook (1993), and Peters (1985).

<sup>15</sup> The definition of "nostalgia" in the *Encyclopedia Britannica's* 11th edition is "homesickness, the desire when away to return home, amounting sometimes to a form of melancholia" compared to Hofer's description of nostalgia as a "disease".

Emotion] (2001), the importance of naming an emotion, in order to explore and analyze it much like a medical diagnosis (15). Making nostalgia public means that our own identification of nostalgia changes according to the current use of the term. Johannisson emphasizes the importance of the semantic process in deriving a meaning equalling our feelings, referring to La Rochefoucauld's famous remark that there are people who would never fall in love if they had not heard about love (Johannisson 16).

Tracing the semantic changes of the word "nostalgia" through history is standard practice among critics in order to understand the complexity of modern nostalgia.<sup>16</sup> But let us not completely void its meaning of other historical contexts. As seen in world literature<sup>17</sup>, nostalgia naturally existed before it attained a linguistic status; it just did not have a name. Nostalgia is a beautiful name; it echoes well the emotional content of the experience. When Hofer named the sometimes deadly disease of being separated from one's home, *nostalgia* (from *nostos*, return home, and *algos*, painful), he Latinized, in the common practice of the times, a well known feeling publicly known as homesickness, or in Swiss dialect *heimweh*. This was of course not only a Swiss phenomenon; we find similar words in most languages: *Maladie du pays* in French, *mal de Corazon* in Spanish, *litost* in Czech, *toska* in Russian, *tesknota* in Polish, and *hemlängtan* in Swedish. In English we find notions of homesickness mentioned as early as 1621 in Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Johannisson 18) before it first appears, according to the *OED*, as a

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<sup>16</sup> For a more thorough historic survey see Boym, Johannisson, Smith, and Starobinski.

<sup>17</sup> Nostalgic emotions are described in old Chinese poetry, in the Arabic verses and *Gilgamesh*; we find it in the Jews' tears at Babylon when they remembered their beloved Zion in the Old Testament; we are familiar with Odysseus' longing for home in Homer's *Odyssey* and Don Quixote's introspective past, and we encounter its theories in St Augustine's *Confessions* and in Confucius' longing for the golden age of the Chou Dynasty.

translation of *heimweh* in 1756.

If we return to Hofer's definition, the idea of nostalgia as a medical condition prevailed much through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a state of melancholia or anxiety. The nineteenth-century romantics nurtured the melancholic aspects of the "disease" and created out of the private dimensions a more public, atmospheric, mood-like, and constructed aesthetic nostalgia, inspired by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Enlightenment reinterpretation of nostalgia as less a longing for a place than as an overexcited state of the senses with an attraction for freedom and childhood (Johannisson 21). This change also coincided with new ideas of temporality as initiated by Immanuel Kant<sup>18</sup> and a general transition from an older, static, and cyclic view of time to linear temporality. The linearity of time corresponded with the idea of progress, which saw unprecedented changes in people's lives during the post-revolutionary times of industrialization, thus creating new desires for past stability and order.<sup>19</sup> In the era of modernity there was a renaissance for medical interests in nostalgia when sociologists were exploring it as a psycho-pathological state grounded in a lack of adaptability<sup>20</sup> and later in Freudian theories about regression, oppression, and libido (Starobinski 102). The interest for nostalgia gradually vanished during the first half of the twentieth century, culminating in the

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<sup>18</sup> Kant rejected the earlier time theories in Aristotelian and Newtonian physics and, to state it simply, favoured a temporality that can be seen as a "sensible intuition" in that it exists only within our own consciousness. See the section "Of Time" in Kant's *The Critique of Pure Reason* (43-53). For an excellent account and modern critique of Kant's ideas about time see Lawrence Friedman's "Kant's Theory of Time".

<sup>19</sup> A thorough analysis of how the idea of progress changes people's relations to past and future in the end of the eighteenth century can be found in Reinhart Koselleck's *Future Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*.

<sup>20</sup> See Johannisson (132-136) where she draws conclusions from sociologists Max Weber, Émile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tönnies. See also Simmel.

absence of nostalgia in dictionaries after the Second World War, until postmodern ideas politicized it in the late 1950s and 60s, thus completing a long shift of interest from private nostalgia to public nostalgia.

Nobody today considers nostalgia to be equal only to homesickness, nor a Freudian psychoanalytic state or a political tool; through romanticism, modernism, and postmodernism, history has added and deducted meanings of the word and thus actually fine-tuned it into a more specific and precise meaning. At the same time it has opened up the interpretations of nostalgia to cover a wider area of experience than was conceived at the beginning. Johannisson writes that “within the variable meaning and historical change of the word remains a non-corrupt essence that can be described as *longing*” (10).<sup>21</sup> In that sense, nostalgia is trans-historical; the essence of nostalgia is longing for the lost. Its history has not changed its essence, but illuminated it.

Aaron Santesso claims, in *A Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia* (2006), that the first time the word “nostalgia” was used in its modern sense was in D. H. Lawrence’s *The Lost Girl* from 1920 (13):

The terror, the agony, the nostalgia of the heathen past was a constant torture to her mediumistic soul. She did not know what it was. But it was a kind of neuralgia in the very soul, never to be located in the human body, and yet physical. Coming over the brow of a heathy, rocky hillock, and seeing Ciccio beyond leaning deep over the plough, in his white shirt-sleeves following the slow, waving, moth-pale oxen across a small track of land turned up in the heathen hollow, her soul would go all faint, she would almost swoon with the realisation of the world that had gone before. (315)

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<sup>21</sup> All citations of Johannisson are translated by me.

In *Lost Girl*, nostalgia has found its modern liberal expression, as an experience of both individual and collective consciousness, influenced by the distant observation, and with a home that is freed from its early spatial limitations and now is the “heathen past,” a mythical impersonal one rather than an individual one.

A modern concept of nostalgia, then, has to be a collection and gathering of the different ways nostalgia has been interpreted in the course of both its etymological and actual history. We need to formulate a modern concept of nostalgia that retains these liberties of its meaning, derived from the subjectivity of its nature, while at the same time keeping a convenient term that can be used more objectively.

This chapter’s main aim is to investigate nostalgia as an individual experience rather than a historic phenomenon; this is in order to properly understand and create a relationship between a nostalgic experience and a *fictive* nostalgic experience. It means that tracing the history of nostalgia, in all its disguises, is not a prior goal. As we will encounter, the experience itself is related to the external interpretations of it, and therefore history will occasionally interfere with our hermeneutics. This is particularly true when it comes to the relationship between nostalgia and modernity which effects our interpretation of literary nostalgia in the modern period.

First, we must define why it is an experience and not an emotion, and interpret the different phases of what I choose to call *the nostalgic reaction*. Following the structure of the experience we will distinguish how these phases interact. In this process we distil the essentials of nostalgia in each phase: its resistance and protest against the progress of time will be interpreted in the light of modernity, followed by its ambivalent relationship to temporality and memory; then we will look at its liberating division in

public and personal time consciousness; last, we will conclude on a note on nostalgia's relation to death as a consequence of its resistance to time.

### **The Nostalgic Experience**

I propose that we refer to nostalgia primarily as an experience rather than just an emotion. First, it is not my invention; James G. Hart refers to nostalgia as an "experience" in his essay "Toward a Phenomenology of Nostalgia" (397), and Davis carries this further and incorporates the term "experience" to describe the various emotions and reactions that emancipate into feelings of nostalgia (Davis 1-30). Johannisson also refers to a nostalgic experience, although she prefers to articulate nostalgia mostly as an emotion, as implied in the title of her work, just like her predecessor Starobinski. Second, as we will see later, there is a point in making the distinction between experience and emotion in order to more fully understand how experience differs from emotion.

According to *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, an emotion is a basic, strong, individual experience with a relatively short duration such as joy, sadness, happiness, anger, and fear. The term "emotion" is often misused to convey a whole affective experience (35), but in modern research the former limitations of an emotion has been modified to include a variety of emotions and their cultural associations; they refer to basic and complex emotions, whereas the basic emotions are singular and pure, and the complex are constituted of more than one emotion. Clearly nostalgia is more complex than one singular emotion and often includes several basic emotions such as joy and sadness. However, nostalgia's complexity is not only a result of different emotional contexts, but also a variety of social,

cultural, and historical implications; hence, calling it an experience includes a wider range of variables.

Perhaps what we in language refer to as “a feeling” is better conveyed as a *mood*. Davis sometimes acknowledges the advantage to “treat nostalgia as a distinctive form of consciousness” (74) and Susan Stewart declares nostalgia as both “a sadness without an object” and a “desire for desire” (23). When we use the term *mood* it is equivalent to consciousness as well as, concluded in chapter one, aesthetics.

For the sake of being able to separate two different emotional reactions, we will divide the nostalgic experience into one that follows the theories of emotions with its more cognitive phases (*The Nostalgic Emotional Experience*) and one that embraces the more vague contours of mood (*The Nostalgic Mood Experience*). We will spend more time discussing the former because many aspects of the nostalgic emotion will be valid for the nostalgic mood as well.

### **The Nostalgic Reaction**

The nostalgic emotional experience can be divided into three main phases: *motivation*, *nostalgia*, and *reflection*. The different phases create, in chronological order, what we will refer to as *the nostalgic reaction*, since they trigger each other.

In *motivation*, we belong to the present now and are subjectively and subsequently transported into the object of our longings. This transportation is triggered by what we will refer to as a *memorative sign* in combination with a dependence on the present moment as well as psychological and sociological facts in the nostalgic subject, *the nostalgee*.

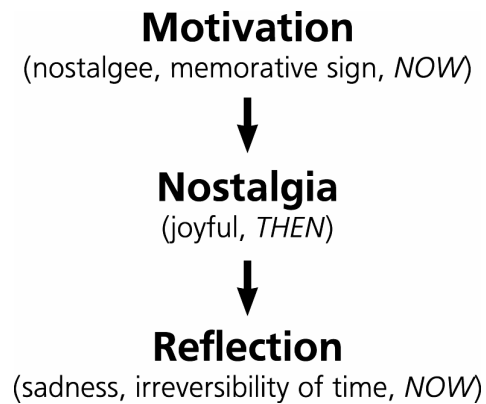


Fig.3. The Nostalgic Reaction.

*Nostalgia* is our term for the space or time of our longing, our remembrance, and our idealized, or selective, recollection of a distant then or there. This phase is exemplified by a strong joyful, happy, positive emotional reaction.

When this dreamy phase ebbs out into an act of *reflection* (cognitive state), there is a gradual transformation from joy to sadness resulting in melancholia or even a bitterness that is a reaction to an emerging knowledge of the transient quality of our nostalgia, the irreversibility of time. The choice of terms will be further explained and motivated later.

## Motivation

The “petites madeleine” in Marcel Proust’s *Du côté de chez Swann* [*The Way By Swann’s*] (1913) is perhaps the most famous example of a memory stimuli; through the combined taste of the cake and tea, the narrator is momentarily



transported away from the “gloomy” present to the paradisiacal memories of his childhood. We have all experienced something similar, but what is the nature of the different stimulus that triggers nostalgic experiences? And how important are the personality and characteristics of the person experiencing nostalgia, and what is the social context of this person?

### **The Nostalgiee**

In the centre of the nostalgic experience is the person who experiences it. We will call him *the nostalgiee*. There are several reasons for not clutching to an established term, such as “nostalgic.” One is the multitude of meanings that can be derived from the word “nostalgic.” First it was used as an adjective, describing the specificity of a certain longing or yearning as in R. M. Bird’s *Peter Pilgrim* (1838), “[...]A nostalgic longing for the bright and beautiful world we have left behind us” (qtd. in *OED*), or later in D. M. Jones’ *In Parenthesis* (1937), “He heard..the nostalgic puffing of a locomotive, far off, across forbidden fields” (qtd. in *OED*). Then, in 1938, the word “nostalgic” begins to address the nostalgic as a subject and becomes a noun as in this *New York Times Book Review* article: “Writers are forever going back where they came from to distil The True Essence of the American scene. New York, not generally admitted to the Union, seldom figures in these nostalgics” (qtd. in *OED*).

Besides the confusion of meanings, the main reason for our objection against using “nostalgic” to describe the person experiencing nostalgia is that the noun seems more to rely on voluntary motivations; a person searching for nostalgic desire. This can certainly describe some persons’ nostalgic eventualities, but it definitely does not encircle the whole group. It also entails the problems of a chronic state of mind, as discussed above, and this

is further expressed in the term “nostalgist” which is explained as “A professedly or habitually nostalgic person; a person who attempts to recreate or sentimentally recollects the past” (*OED*).

Finally, the use of “nostalgic” is often preceded with words such as “these” or “that” giving it a negative ring. Additionally, it is an external description, public if you wish, that does not convey the complexities of the individual personal experience. We have therefore chosen the word *nostalgee* instead, deriving from the narrative term “narratee” of the listener to a narrator’s narrative. This seems to correspond more exactly to an experience triggered by a nostalgic motivation; the *nostalgee* responds to the motivation as the narratee responds to the narrator in a cause and effect situation. It also means that we can not call a person a *nostalgee*, if he suffers from a tendency to be nostalgic. Instead *nostalgee* refers to each and every one of us when we are having a nostalgic experience.

Once we have settled with the semantics, what is to be said about the importance of the social, cultural, and psychological status of the *nostalgee*? As suggested above, there might be a strong voluntary force, a desire to be nostalgic. We can notice Walter Benjamin’s attitude in *Das Passagen-Werk* [*The Arcades Project*] towards experiencing the past, in which he requires certain attitudes in the person in order for him to relive the past. Instead of knowledge, he promotes *lived* experience, *Erlebnis*. In Benjamin’s example, the idle stroller in Paris experiences not only a present but also a non-personal past through the sloping streets: “It leads downward – if not to the mythical Mothers, then into a past that can be all the more profound because it is not his own, not private” (Benjamin 880). In that sense it is not a memory, but an absolute past. The stroller needs to be “available to time” in fact he has to be wasting time (Agacinski 55). Benjamin’s requirements not only go

far beyond simple desire, but also encourage thoughts about how we can prepare ourselves for the past. However, the subconscious, involuntary forces behind nostalgia are more interesting.

Davis spends several chapters discussing the relationship between identity and nostalgia, and presents the importance nostalgia plays in individual development and maintenance (Davis 31-71). How does the personality affect the nostalgic experience? In addition to the analogues between certain cultures and nostalgia, Davis asserts that individual psychology and social states are reflected in the need for nostalgia. Davis claims that “the nostalgic evocation of some past state of affairs always occurs in the context of present fears, discontents, anxieties, or uncertainties, even though they may not be in the forefront of awareness [...]” (Davis 34). This, what we will call the *theory of the disillusioned present*, was noted already by Haspel in his 1873 study: “A harsh present makes [the patient] look into the past, because the past means security” (qtd. in Smith 512). Before that, the longing for home by exiled soldiers was initiated by this lack of security in foreign lands. Davis refers to this need as a matter of identity continuity, or in Aristotelian terms, creating order out of chaos. This seems to correspond, on a cultural level, with the well known notion of an increase in nostalgic awareness during times of revolution or recessions in societies. As Jameson seems to prove, the political use of nostalgia in totalitarian fascist states usually coincides with economical depression (“Walter Benjamin, or Nostalgia” 82). The political use of nostalgia reinforces the individual anxieties of the times.

So it seems that people are more inclined to have nostalgic experiences in times of personal crises or times of national instability. Individual crises, in a psychological sense, occur during times of identity crises such as

adolescence, early adulthood, middle age, and old age. On a personal level we not only deal with failure, divorce, deceased friends or relatives but also more existential issues such as loss of a meaning of life or alienation. In this category we can also include psychological defects and drug abuse. It corresponds with Freud's idea of melancholia as grounded in a lack of self-esteem and strong self-accusations ("Mourning and Melancholia" 244-49).

From a gender perspective and for an extended time, men were considered to be nostalgic than women. This seems to conflict, as Davis acknowledges, with the more common presumption that women are "more romantic, more open to emotional influence" and hence more prone to nostalgia (55). According to the theory of nostalgia as identity continuative, Davis reports that much anthropological research in the 1960s concludes that it is the Western male "who experiences the sharper transitional discontinuities of status, role, and often geographical location [...]" through work, military service, and other disruptive faculties (55). This might have had some validity in the 1960s and earlier, or in cultures where gender equality has not yet been prolific or had a withstanding impact on the evolution of society. In most countries in the West, however, the "discontinuities" of professional status and geographical location can equally include women. Conclusively, propensity for nostalgia is not a matter of sex, but a matter of cultural gender issues and personal relationships to contexts of home, such as family and kin (Davis 56). The non-gendered and non-ethnic aspects of nostalgia are further supported by three studies: Batcho (1995; 1998) and Best and Nelson (1985).

Are there other aspects of our upbringing that have impact on our nostalgia as well? If we briefly ponder the fate of the Swiss soldiers who felt such strong longings for their beloved Alps, we must consider the influence

of geography. Perhaps, if we grow up in a particularly beautiful landscape (and this, of course, depends on personal taste), we often create more everlasting memories that might occur later and more frequently than someone who grows up in a more mundane environment. Eighteenth-century essayist James Beattie explains why the mountains have such impact on homesickness: “For precipices, rocks, and torrents are durable things; and, being more striking to the fancy than any other natural appearances in the plains, take faster hold of the memory; and may therefore more frequently recur to the absent native” (qtd. in Salvesen 41-42). There can be a connection between the experienced landscape and nostalgia, but I still think that how a certain person experiences his surroundings has more to do with personality than geographical background. Surely the Eskimos have the capacity to feel nostalgic for their snowy and icy childhoods even though these characteristics are *not* durable.

As mentioned above, nostalgia seems more common for persons experiencing an identity crisis. “Things aren’t what they used to be” is a common complaint from the aged. In old age we have many of the following experiences: loss of loved ones, alienation in terms of technology, existential issues, and validation of our choices. Although many people age gracefully, many are plagued by ill health and sadness, and there is a discontent with their present state. Stephen Priest draws the following scheme over the chronology of life, based on the theories of Maurice Merleau-Ponty:

1. Life
2. Consciousness of Life
3. Consciousness of Death
4. Death (Priest 42)

This simple chart explains the preoccupation with death among older people. The final crisis in life is also the tip of the iceberg of nostalgic escapism. It responds to the consensus that children rarely experience nostalgia, since the nostalgia needs to be conscious of death. To focus on old age as the age of nostalgia contradicts earlier psychological studies that reveal adolescence as the age of nostalgia, a time when people are usually separated from home (McCann 170). I think it has more to do with anticipation of death, which, as Agacinski writes, “we cannot help thinking about [...]” and has two consequences closely related to nostalgia: “melancholia” and “love for finite things or beings [...]” (14). Adolescence, like old age, can be a time of existential doubts concerning the extinction of one’s self; in the former case perhaps triggered by the separation **from** the stability of home and family.

Maurice Halbwachs has an additional explanation for older people’s nostalgic tendencies. He juxtaposes them with younger people and distinguishes different relations to the past:

It seems fairly natural that adults, absorbed as they are with everyday preoccupations, are not interested in what from the past is now irrelevant to these preoccupations. But this is not the case with old people. These men and women are tired of action and hence turn away from the present so that they are in a most favorable position to evoke events of the past as they really appeared. (*On Collective Memory* 47)

### **Nostalgia and Modernity**

In our understanding of nostalgia’s refusal to accept the conditions of life, the flowing of time (the time arrow), and the inevitability of extinction, we owe much to modernity which fuelled nostalgia with an unprecedented awareness of time.

Modern nostalgia, naturally, bears a significant relation to modernity, as identified by recent scholars. Kimberly K. Smith argues that nostalgia actually is the “product of – and indelibly shaped by – nineteenth- and twentieth-century conflicts over the political significance of the past” and as such is related to progress as a “progressive paratheory” (505-06). Agacinski writes that “[t]he idea of modernity refers less to a situation in time than it is itself *a certain way of thinking about time*, free from both eternity and so-called historical *necessity*” (20), thus configuring the temporally liberated notion of nostalgia. Also Svetlana Boym’s modern concept of nostalgia originates in its reaction to modernity: “I realized that nostalgia goes beyond individual psychology. At first glance, nostalgia is a longing for a place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time – the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams. In a broader sense, nostalgia is rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress” (xv).

Jay Gatsby’s peculiar and pathetic gesture in *The Great Gatsby*, stretching “out his hand desperately [...]” (160) towards the past, emblemizes both modern nostalgia’s teleological concern and entropic vision of modernity, and the melancholia and pain involved in this retrospection. The modern concept of nostalgia is heavily influenced by reactions to the era of progress in post-revolutionary Europe. To illustrate this, let us speculate on the nature of a typical *nostalgia*: that of the desire to return to our childhood’s domains and how this nostalgia can be linked to a reaction against modernity.

This desire is brilliantly conveyed in Pascal Mercier’s *Nachtzug nach Lissabon* [*Night Train to Lisbon*] (2004) when the writer within the narrative reflects on the reasons behind returning to his old school yard some thirty years later:

Now I finally seem to know what keeps compelling me to undertake the trip to the school: I'd like to go back to those minutes in the schoolyard when the past had dropped off of us and the future hadn't yet begun. Time came to a halt and held its breath, as it never again did. Was it Maria João's brown knees and the fragrance of soup in her light dress that I'd like to go back to? Or is it the wish – the dreamlike, bombastic wish – to stand once again in that point in my life and be able to take a completely different direction than the one that has made me who I am now? (55-56)

According to this description, we want to return to our past and that magic liberated feeling of having our whole life in front of us. The idealized nature of our pasts, in concordance with dissatisfaction with our present state, makes us ponder on the righteousness of our choices. But that is not, as the fictive writer in *Nachtzug nach Lissabon* soon understands, the crucial reason behind our longing for our past. Like him, when we return to that crossroad in our past, we are not the same person as we were back then and cannot make our choices based on a future not yet experienced. There is "*something peculiar about this wish*," Mercier writes, "*it smacks of paradox and logical peculiarity*" (56). I think the clue is to be found in the book's epigraph, by Jorge Manrique: "Our lives are rivers, gliding free / to that unfathomed, boundless sea, / the silent grave!" (qtd. in Mercier). It is not really only a desire to change our lives; it is silent cry against the avalanching time we call progress.

These cries can be found throughout history. St. Augustine's mourning about the inevitability of time and loss in *Confessions* is but one example, but the extent of these "cries" echoed louder than ever during the industrial revolution in post revolutionary Europe and the US. This culminated in a



wave of nostalgic sentiments as a response to unprecedented enormous and rapid change in people's lives.

In the midst of the improvements in social affairs and life style, a strong technological development, urbanization, a modernized administration and bureaucracy, new means of transport, communications and media, the explosive growth of newspapers, and the world exhibitions pushed society forward for a universally shared world and a constant improvement. This all changed people's attitude towards time.<sup>22</sup> Boym writes:

The idea of progress through revolution or industrial development became central to the nineteenth-century culture. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the representation of time itself changed; it moved away from allegorical human figures – an old man, a blind youth holding an hourglass, a woman with bared breasts representing Fate – to the impersonal language of numbers: railroad schedules, the bottom line of industrial progress. (9)

As most critics have acknowledged, a crucial development in this change can be seen in a new perception of time, especially in the aftermath of Kant's radical reinterpretation of nostalgia (Johannisson 23; Starobinski 94; Boym 9). In his *Anthropologie in pragmatischer hinsicht* [*Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*] (1796/97) he asserts that nostalgia is not curable, since one's longing is not for the place of childhood but the childhood itself; the loss is absolute:

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<sup>22</sup> On how modernity affected the human consciousness, see Berman or Berger, Berger & Kellner.

The *homesickness* of the Swiss (and, as I have it from the mouth of an experienced general, also the Westphalians and Pomeranians from certain regions) that seizes them when they are transferred to other lands is the result of a longing for the places where they enjoyed the very simple pleasures of life – aroused by the recollection of images of the carefree life and neighborly company in their early years. For later, after they visit these same places, they are greatly disappointed in their expectations and thus also find their homesickness cured. To be sure, they think that this is because they cannot bring back their youth there. (Kant 71)

The new concepts of time started a teleological rampage, a strong belief in the ideas of progress. The past was outdated; the future goal of progress was a constant improvement in human social affairs and life style. This rapid change also created, or demanded, a new sort of person:

The first code was; *changeability*. Enlightenment and the mentality of the revolution had formed the ideal: liberation, disengagement, moveable, openness, plastic, adaptable. The second code was: rational. The modern person was rational, disciplined, with total control over emotions, impulses and instincts. Debauching emotions must be held back. Also longing back and home, must be reconstructed. (Johannisson 129)

It was a time of contrasts, of conflicts between the old and the new. Maybe this time even could be described as “schizophrenic” as Johannisson argues, an interior break as a result of living in two different worlds at the same time, alienation to the new urban world and modernization (133). Growing out of this “schizophrenia” was a strong longing for the past times, and “the slower rhythms of the past, for continuity, social cohesion and tradition” (Boym 16).

If being modern was to be part of a universe in which, as Karl Marx said, “all that is solid melts into air” (qtd. in Berman 15), then being nostalgic is a symptom of poor adaptability to the modern way, and as such is a despicable “disease” in the eyes of progress. Kimberly K. Smith writes that nostalgia “silence[d] the victims of modernization [...]” and made their emotions “suspect” (507). The modern man had to emigrate west, search for gold, travel far, move into the city, and adapt to the new culture of the urban society – *not* look back into the past. Nostalgia became conservative and reactionary in the age of rationalization. Rationality was temporarily halted by the Romantics. Francis Hutcheson in his *Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (1728) asserts that there was no space for the kind of emotions that were considered wild, physical, and unsound; only emotions that motivated action such as greed, jealousy, and vanity were respectable. That led to a division not between rationality and feeling, but rather between emotions as something sound and passions as something dismissible (Johannisson 131). As such, nostalgia, being a passion, was discarded from the rationality project and became “a crack in the modern world” (Johannisson 135). Nostalgia became exiled and alienated.

Assessing critically the effects of the modern world of progress is part of the whole project of modernity, and is why we can see a heightened interest in anti-progressive nostalgia both in theoretic consciousness and art in the age of modernity. “Modernity and modernisms,” writes Boym, “are responses to the condition of modernization and the consequences of progress. This modernity is contradictory, critical, ambivalent and reflective on the nature of time; it combines fascination for the present with the longing for another time” (22). Johannisson presents three reactions to the modern demand of rationality: a critique of modernity based on that longing for

home/past confirms that man is un-rooted from his origin and sense of value; a loyalty to modernity, which finds new ways in the modern world to express and experience the past in more institutionalized external ways (museums, living history museums and societies); and finally, an adaptable strategy, in which man finds new ways, within modernity, to create new foundations for roots and social interventions within the modern society (134). Georg Simmel, in his groundbreaking dissection of modern life, asserts similarly in “The Metropolis and Mental Life” that there was an aspect of modernization that interfered with human well-being.

Charles Baudelaire, the “father of modernity,” employs in “The Painter of Modern Life” (1859-60) this exact ambivalence; he wants to both capture the modern but also flirt with the eternal. Modernity is the transitory, “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is eternal and the immutable” (*The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* 12). Baudelaire embraces modernity and the urban life style: “The modern city is the poet’s imperfect home,” as Boym writes, where the word “imperfect” suitably emphasizes Baudelaire’s critical agenda towards progress (21). The anti-modern discourse is clear; modernity has uprooted and alienated the human being from its centuries-old traditions, norms, and value systems. It has created an egotistical monster, only with materialism and imaginary freedom as profit, undoubtedly heading towards the domains of *verfremdung*, shallowness, and superficiality (Johannisson 134-35).

This digression into modernity has served its purpose to illuminate two of the strongest forces motivating nostalgia: our fear of death and the progress of time. These feelings were obviously not exclusive to the age of modernity, but they became more acute due to the rapid changes of people’s lives. In pre-industrial thought, time was not a factor in the same way.

Stability and circular temporality, stimulated by traditions and a rural life cycle, did not initiate voluntary reactions towards time.<sup>23</sup> But it means not, as St Augustine proves, that these sentiments were not realities, only more unconscious and unarticulated realities. Similarly, as Hutcheon notes, there has been a strong “attempt to defy the end, to evade teleology” in more recent times of change, particularly in the apocalyptic millennium change.

### **Memorative signs**

The disillusioned present, the persona of the nostalgee, and contemporary collective forces play important parts in triggering the nostalgic reaction. Equally important are the actual stimuli, which we choose to call *memorative signs*, derived from Rousseau’s *A Dictionary of Music* (1775), where he reflects on how music “does not [...] act precisely as music, but as a memorative sign” (Rousseau 267). Memorative signs can be divided into *souvenirs* (physical objects), *sensations*, *situations*, and *imagination*s.

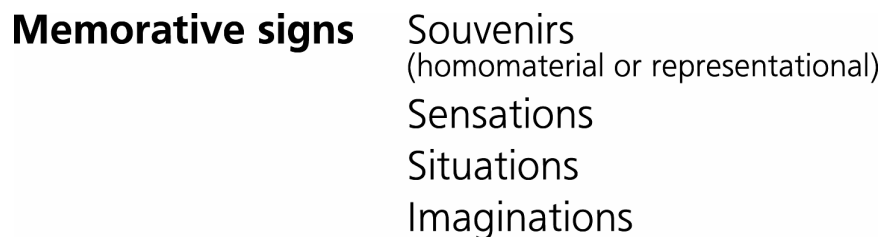


Fig. 4. Memorative Signs.

Sometimes, the triggering of the nostalgic reaction is a combination of several or all of these types. The signs often have a direct relationship to the *nostalgia* such as the “petite madeleine”; the signs appear in both the present and the

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<sup>23</sup> See Koselleck for a further analysis of how modernity and the idea of progress changed concepts of time.

past, as signposts through time. However, this is not always the case; occasionally there is no direct link between the two. That is, there is some kind of relationship, but this does not have to be immediate; it can be of a more symbolic and representative nature. We can refer to signs as being *direct* (an explicit link) and *indirect* (representational).

Before we discuss the memorative signs further we have to enter the debate about the division between voluntary memory and involuntary memory. In recent scientific memory studies, the terms *explicit* memory and *implicit* memory are used to separate memories we recall by will and those which are recalled or “used” without conscious effort.<sup>24</sup> Although explicit memory correspond exactly to voluntary memory, studies of implicit memories tend to focus more on how we learn things subconsciously through repeatedly valuing our past experience in a present state and perform simple tasks without remembering how, such as riding a bicycle or tying our shoes, than actual recollection of past events. Therefore we will rely

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<sup>24</sup> Explicit memory, also known as episodic memory, is a memory of personal experiences organized in a temporal order. Endel Tulving describes them as a means of traveling back in time. Semantic memory, on the other end, is a structured record of facts, concepts and skills that we have acquired. Semantic information is derived from accumulated episodic memory. Together they make up what is called declarative memory. Recent cognitive neuroscience places episodic memory in the medial temporal lobe and the prefrontal cortex. For more on episodic memory see Tulving’s “Episodic Memory: from Mind to Brain”. Implicit memory, or procedural memory, consists of memories that are recalled with less conscious effort than explicit memory. It is a long term memory that is based on repetition, practice, and learning of certain activities such as tying your shoes or riding a bicycle. Confabulation is a memory disorder where a verbal statement of a past event is false but is usually unintentional. Confabulation is divided into spontaneous and provoked memory disorder, where the spontaneous is an involuntary memorial of a false memory whereas provoked confabulation is a normal response to a false memory. Confabulations do not have to be verbal but can also be behavioral; an example occurs when a person acts upon his false memories. Subjects that confabulate could be linked to that of the idealized, selected memory of nostalgia, although this connection has never been made. For more on confabulation see Moscovitch “Confabulation”.

on the classic division between voluntary and involuntary memory.<sup>25</sup>

Voluntary memory is triggered by our intelligence, as, for example, by voluntarily remembering past events or people. This can mean that the triggering factor is contained within our fantasy, dreams and thoughts, and that the memory is provoked by thought related mechanisms – what we call *imaginations*. More importantly, it can also make use of outer stimuli such as voluntarily playing a recording that you are aware will trigger memories. In this latter case, it represents something in between voluntary and involuntary memory, since the act of remembering is voluntary, but the effect of the record might have a more subconscious effect.

Involuntary memory, on the other hand, catches us off guard and flows over us, but it is still triggered by something. The most famous memorative sign, the smell and taste of the “petite madeleine,” is definitely involuntary: “But at the very instant when the mouthful of tea mixed with cake-crumbs touched my palate, I quivered, attentive to the extraordinary thing that was happening in me” (Proust, *The Way by Swann's* 47).

Hart claims that “a memory of nostalgia, cannot be recalled at will” and uses Proust as an example (397). Certainly, much of our nostalgic reactions are triggered by involuntary memories, and were also triggered already among the Swiss soldiers when they accidentally heard cow bells or drank milk that reminded them of their native land. Perhaps there is, as Proust argues, a more reverent and strong nostalgic reaction involved when it is triggered involuntarily. The narrator in *Du côté de chez Swann* laments the fact that the “past is hidden outside the realm of our intelligence and beyond its reach [...]” (Proust, *The Way by Swann's* 47). The affect of the memory is

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<sup>25</sup> In some psychological theoretical work it is preferred to use the terms *passive* and *deliberate* instead of involuntary and voluntary.

more vivid and strong, catching us off guard and triggering memories that are stored deeper down in our memory bank; therefore it appears more surprising to us. Still, Proust is contradicting himself since the earlier voluntary remembrance in *Du côté de chez Swann*, where the narrator recollects his desire for his mother's kiss during his sleepless night, is just as alive and strong as the later involuntary one (Madeleine cake), at least in a literary sense.

The absolute freedom of consciousness, according to Halbwachs, is only to be found in dreaming. Challenging Bergson's belief in subjective time and individual consciousness<sup>26</sup>, he asserts that it is only in a dream state that our consciousness is involuntary and that "we are incapable of reliving our past while we dream" except in the form of images that "are introduced in a fragmented state" (*On Collective Memory* 41). Proust's narrative certainly is not a fragmented memory, like something out of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, but a

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<sup>26</sup> Henri Bergson's concept of duration is a very complicated issue and evolves around his whole philosophical system of intuition and free will. For our concerns it is enough to distinguish duration in terms of time. Duration is the flux of memories, passions, thoughts, and emotions that cannot be put in one temporal progression but defines the inner consciousness of a subject. This is strongly contrasted to that of mechanical clock time: "When I follow with my eyes on the dial of a clock the movement of the hand which corresponds to the oscillations of the pendulum, I do not measure duration [...] I merely count simultaneities, which is very different. Outside of me, in space, there is never more than a single position of the hand and the pendulum, for nothing is left of the past positions. Within myself a process of organization or interpenetration of conscious states is going on, which constitutes true duration" (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* 107-08). The idea of an inner time and inner consciousness, freed from the clock time, became very influential on the artistic movements of modernism. Arnold Hauser describes this forcefully: "The accent is now on the simultaneity of the contents of consciousness, the immanence of the past in the present, the constant flowing together of the different periods of time, the amorphous fluidity of inner experience, the boundlessness of the stream of time by which the soul is borne along [...] In this new conception of time almost all the strands of the texture which form the stuff of modern art converge: the abandonment of the plot, the elimination of the hero, the relinquishing of psychology, the 'automatic method of writing' and, above all, the montage technique and the intermingling of temporal and spatial forms of the film" (226).



very deliberately constructed one, although it follows the ideas of memory association. Halbwachs defines all memories as reconstructions which are based on several reinterpretations during the course of life. These reconstructions are also as a result of the factors and forces in the present state where these memories are recollected. For him there is no involuntary memory. I think he is correct that there has been confusion between involuntary triggering and involuntary memory. The motivation for our memories is basically a mix of voluntary and involuntary probabilities; they can be either one or both. Involuntary forces have the capacity to transport us to a certain memory, much like a time machine. But the actual memory is a construction based on the motivation and the signpost of our past. That explains why the actual triggering tends to fade in our recollection. We see a photograph and we are involuntarily transported to this photo in a past event. We see it hang over our bed as children, but then it fades away, and we voluntarily reconstruct a past that emanates out of this photograph. It could be memories that took place in this bedroom or something quite different related to it.

Let us return to the memorative signs. Inspired by Susan Stewart, we will refer to memorative signs of physical objects as *souvenirs*. The “capacity of objects to serve as traces of authentic experience is,” writes Stewart, “exemplified by the souvenir” (Stewart 135). Stewart divides souvenirs into two categories (136). The first she calls “homomaterial” from Umberto Eco (*A Theory of Semiotics* 217), which means that it is a part of something real from the past. This could be a lock of hair or a piece of clothes. It will thus act in a metonymic way. The second she names “representational,” which means a reproduction of something real, like a miniature gondola from Venice. Furthermore, souvenirs can be divided into public (external) and private

(internal); public souvenirs are post cards, or general souvenirs of all kinds, which have no direct attachment to a real experience, whereas private souvenirs are not meaningful to anyone else because they are “mapped against the life history of an individual” (Stewart 139). A homomaterial souvenir tends more often to be internal, naturally, but we can imagine that a preserved lock of hair of Mary Queen of Scots could be a memorative sign for someone and thus external. Stewart emphasizes that the souvenir is always incomplete (136). The nostalgic power is due to its incompleteness; if it were complete, or an exact replica of an experience, it would not be nostalgic. Usually, as noted above, the souvenir itself is not the memory; the links between present and past are initiated and structured by the souvenir, but when we reach the souvenir in the past we voluntarily start to recreate the past we desire, often leaving the actual sign behind.

Let us consider Chopin’s *Nocturne nr 8*, from a CD recording on *Deutsche Gramophone* with Daniel Barenboim, playing an important part in one’s past. If we refer to the physical CD, its cover or the actual disc, it acts as a souvenir. But if it is the music itself, it falls within the category of *sensations*. Sensations are non-physical, non-visual things<sup>27</sup> that attract our senses, such as smell, taste, touch, sounds, and music. There is much evidence that it is the sensational memorative signs that play the most important part in triggering our nostalgic experience.<sup>28</sup> As Proust’s narrator tells us, “The sight of the little madeleine had not recalled anything to me before I tasted it; perhaps because I had often seen them since [...] and their image had therefore left those days of Combray and attached itself to others more recent

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<sup>27</sup> Provided they are not artistic expressions such as an artistic photo or film.

<sup>28</sup> For an extended discussion on the ways visual perception differs from gustatory and olfactory sensations in terms of recovering memories see Lennon (58-62).

[...]” (Proust, *The Way by Swann’s* 49). Our visual contact with memorative signs is perhaps more ordinary than the rarity of sensational ones.

The importance of sensational triggering is confirmed by the first testimonies of nostalgia. The early motivations for homesickness were related to either sound or music (Starobinski 89-94). When the Swiss soldiers heard folk melodies from the Alpine regions they evidenced nostalgic reactions, Swiss scientists observed. Similarly, Highlanders proved to feel nostalgic when they heard bagpipe music reminding them of the Highlands (Boym 4). Somewhat later Rousseau talks about how the sound of cow bells triggered memories of the youthful summers in the Swiss soldiers, evidencing that it is not music *per se* but sounds in general that speak to our hearts (267). As Boym writes, “[t]he music of home, whether a rustic cantilena or a pop song, is the permanent accompaniment of nostalgia [...]” (4). There was a diverse and exciting debate in eighteenth-century science about the relationship between memory and music, sparked by the work of the Edinburgh School of Science, which applied theories of memory and ideas of association to nostalgia (Starobinski 89-90). John Gregory wrote in 1765:

The different passions naturally express themselves by different sounds [...] When particular sounds and a certain strain of melody are impressed upon young minds, in a uniform connection with certain passions expressed in a song, this regular association raises these sounds, in progress of time, into a kind of natural and expressive language of the passions. [...] We generally hear with pleasure the music we have been accustomed to in our youth, because it awakens the memory of our guiltless and happy days. (qtd. in Starobinski 92).

Certainly ways of freezing time have historically been important for

nostalgia: the photograph, with an event or subject from the past staring into the present; the moving images, maybe even more so with their realistic depiction of life; and audio recordings of our beloved. There is something evocative in the voices and images of the past. In their reproductive manner, in their three dimensions, or digitalized bits, in “conserving the traces of people and things [...]” (Agacinski 89), they remind us even more so of the lack of life in their subjects. The frozen time in photos or films can be divided into two kinds. They can be souvenirs (private memoirs of people we have known), or they can be public works of art and therefore public souvenirs, if we consider them as physical objects. Much art, such as film, benefits more from being called sensations; few reflect on the physicality of a film.

Naturally, this is not the case with sculptures or paintings. Art has a strong history in triggering nostalgia; we often mention that a certain song, film, or painting makes us nostalgic. Most of the time, this has to do with the work’s position in our temporal past rather than its actual content. It triggers the times *rather* than a time and reminds us more often of a general atmosphere in a past time rather than in a specific event. This is especially true with popular art, like music that is played on radio, at a friend’s home, or in bars.

There is no doubt that music and sound have played and still play an important part in triggering nostalgic reactions. But as the most famous trigger, the “petite madeleine” reminds us, taste (and smell) is of equal importance and was reported to have caused nostalgic epidemics among the Swiss soldiers when fat milk, or rustic soups, like the ones their mothers had prepared for them, reminded them of their homes (Starobinski 87; Boym 4).

The third category of memorative signs we call *situational*. As an example, we see how the seasons trigger emotions about the passage of time, which in turn facilitates nostalgic notions. Classical situational signs are

situations, or maybe more like symbols, that encourage ideas of stability and repetition. As mentioned above, the anticipation of death creates in us a desire for the stable values of life, the repetitions that conquer our own life span. Such repetitions include waves, full moons, sunsets, and the change of seasons. Repetitions have also, as Kimberly K. Smith acknowledges, “long been considered to be the chief characteristic of agrarian life” and therefore, as a cycle of nature, connected to a pre-modern, traditional, and secure life style (517).

The *situational* memorative signs can be more complex as well. They can be a broader reminder that includes both sensations and representational souvenirs within a situation. These situations often correspond to the times and places of our most common longings: traditions, rites of passage such as childhood to puberty, holidays, times of individual crises, or seasons – what Davis refers to as our “life cycle” (Davis 52-71). It is in the ritualized traditions that the public nostalgia can become private. When I attend my nephew’s graduation, the whole sensation brings me back to my own graduation, even though there might be very few similarities between the two. Christmas is also classic in the way it evokes our past memories and all the connotations that are included with the season (childhood, parents, loved ones). This is especially true for people who, for one reason or another, are separated from family and traditions, such as the European emigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as evidenced in this poem from 1906 by Gustav Wicklund:

When Christmastime draws near again  
the Swede-American feels melancholy  
remembering his childhood’s happy days,  
the joy of Christmas and tree and holly.

The trees of bygone years were not so fine  
 as what he lights today, but they were bright  
 with precious memories of joy and love,  
 which rise like stars against his sorrowing night. (qtd.  
 in Skårdal 266)

Most of the above observations are confirmed by a study of what triggered homesickness among East German refugees in West Germany in 1956. Their strongest feelings of nostalgia were triggered by music, pictures in newspapers, celebratory parties, rituals, holidays, festivals, and birthdays (Neff 77-144).

*Imaginative* memorative signs are dreams, thoughts, hopes, that are created within our intelligence and being, and act as the motivation for recreating our memories or dreams. Hofer insisted that nostalgia was fundamentally due to the “strength of the imagination alone [...]” (388). It is interesting to speculate on the role imagination plays, not only in the motivating phase of the nostalgic experience, but also in recreating the object of nostalgic longing in vivid and exciting ways. Imaginative memorative signs should not be confused with subconscious activities, such as psychological states mentioned before in regards to the nostalgee. The imaginative memorative signs are voluntary imaginations, forcing the recurrence of memories through a conscious thought process, but often they are triggered by involuntary signs.

One last aspect of motivation is the “lack of motivation.” One early theory about the Swiss soldiers’ homesickness was identified by Jean-Jacques Scheucher: the nostalgia was a reaction to lack of atmospheric pressure when they entered the plain grounds below (Starobinski 88). We can mock Scheucher now, but maybe we can derive some truth from it. It had nothing to do with atmospheric pressure but with the uniqueness of the Swiss

landscape. Maybe the Swiss soldiers actually missed their mountainous landscape because they were wandering in the plains. Similarly, a conductor on a Swedish train once told me that he always missed the Swedish milk when he was abroad; he was always disappointed in the foreign dairy products. His story remained in my mind and it confirmed that a motivation for longing can also be a lack of something rather than a memorative sign. This “shortcoming” is, it seems, linked strongly with a desire to escape the disillusioned presence.

## The Nostalgia

We will call the place or time that is the object of our longings *the nostalgia*. It might evoke certain misunderstandings, since it is used as the general noun for the whole experience. If we say “I feel nostalgic” it is an incomplete sentence, not grammatically, but content-wise, since we want to ask “about what”? We would then answer, “We feel nostalgic about our first love.” This corresponds with “nostalgia for our first love.” We see this use of the word becoming more common in the 1950s, exemplified by this excerpt from *The Observer* in 1959: “Nostalgic for one’s childhood does not necessarily mean that the childhood was a happy one” (qtd. in *OED*). It is fine to refer to it as the “object of our longings,” but the word nostalgia will include the whole set of events that are surrounding the object, such as idealization and imagination. We will therefore use nostalgia as the actual place or time triggered by the memorative sign. To avoid confusion though, we will predominantly refer to the objects of nostalgia in definite forms such as *the nostalgia* or *nostalgias*, distinguishing it from the general use of the term *nostalgia*.

Nostalgia is also more adequate than “memory,” since memory is not always at work in the second phase of the nostalgic experience, and it is wise to avoid confusions between memory and nostalgia. Therefore we will look closer at how memory functions.

### **Memory and Temporality**

In addition to the theories of voluntary or involuntary memory, much debate in recent memory studies has been about the relationship between personal memory and collective memory, and whether our memories are trustworthy or even false. It is obvious that, as we will see in our discussion about external and internal nostalgia, our memory is influenced and sometimes forcefully created through external forces. The idea of false memory, or in our case the “idealized” memory, has to do with ideas of shared memory or collective pressure in external cases, and in internal situations it has more to do with voluntary personal forces. A confusing aspect is the different terminology that exists. Some speak of private and public remembering, others about individual versus collective memories. Are they the same?

As Halbwachs clearly demonstrates, collective memory does not exist as a phenomenon, but only as a measuring device for the influence of collective history and culture on the individual memory: “While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember” (*The Collective Memory* 48). That means that the terms private/public, individual/collective cannot be regarded in terms of experience or consciousness. As we have seen in the section about motivation, all experiences are individual and subjective even though they can be affected by a popularization of the past: conventions, usage in media and politics. The



important question is rather how the individual memory relates to personal and collective history. Halbwachs believes, as we have seen, that the only consciousness that is not directly influenced by external forces is dreaming, where memory is not a crucial aspect since our pasts are fragmented and put together in new ways (*On Collective Memory* 41).

Halbwachs also makes a sharp distinction between historical and autobiographical memory. The first engages a person only through written records and other types of records and is kept alive through commemorations, celebrations, and festivities. Autobiographical memory is memory of events that we have personally experienced in life.

Autobiographical memory is also constantly reinforced by people who shared it and by memorative signs; otherwise it fades away. That means that the personal memory is also a reconstruction through social interventions, much like the historical, and therefore individual memory in its pure form does not exist. This is not what Bergson believed, when he created a two-folded memory, "one made of habits and turned toward action, and another which involves a certain disinterest in present life" (Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* 47). Since nostalgia is not dependent on a "truthful" memory, its quintessence, much like Bergson predicts, lies in our capacity to freely relate to time in a social and personal way. This means that some of our memorial constructs are void as well as liberated from external influences.

The discussions about memory also touch upon the matter of the past's actual existence. This has been challenged by several recent proponents of presentism such as Mark Currie and Craig Bourne. Perhaps they were influenced by Halbwachs' assertion that the past is a construction of the present. Halbwachs, though, is the first to admit that it does not mean that a past does not in fact exist. Sociologist Barry Schwartz has shown that if we

refuse a past, there is no continuity in history at all (374-97). The past is changed due to reinterpretations, but it is also persistent and continuous. Schwartz exemplifies with the classic metaphor of a river, that we never step into the same river, but this river still has “persistent characteristics” not shared by any other river.

“[M]odern temporality is the endless interlacing of the irreversible and the repetitive,” writes Agacinski, touching upon the temporal paradox of nostalgia (12). In order to have a “past” we need to have a present and probably a future; time has to be linear and irreversible as confirmed by physics by the second principle of thermodynamics and Joseph Fournier’s equation for heat. Our longing for the past is strong, we are all “boats against the current,” desperately trying to reverse time. Irreversibility is essential to nostalgia, it is an incurable phenomenon: the longing for the past is an impossible mission. Time is thus not equal to Newtonian time; events are not physically saved in a container to be restored. Nostalgia is a personal consciousness. It relates on one hand to the linearity and empirical realism and on the other hand to Neo-Kantian subjectivism. Nostalgia dwells in the grey zone between Husserl’s internal time consciousness and an external temporal measurement. The subjectivity of time, the Bergsonian *durée*, subverts the irreversibility of time and permits a subject to relive past, and future, events in individual consciousness.

Memory and nostalgia are, thus, fundamentally related but still different phenomena. The confusion between nostalgia and memory is often due to the fact that nostalgia incorporates an element of memory, whereas memory does not involve nostalgia. “Memory,” as Johannisson writes, “can be recollection, remembrance, flashback, or sentimental or therapeutic return. It can be yearning, searching, idealizing, forgetful, build on vague

reminiscences, fleeting impressions or a single symbolic detail" (145). The crucial difference between memory and nostalgia is that memory *does not* require reflection, whereas in nostalgia it is automatically included.

All the above has consequences on our interpretation of the nostalgic experience. The traditional division of nostalgia in private and public has to be challenged.

### **Internal and External Nostalgia**

We will use the terms *internal* and *external* to refer to the types of nostalgic experience. Internal nostalgia is related to a personal memory, what Halbwachs refers to as autobiographical memory. If the degrees of social influence on this nostalgia vary from case to case, how can we measure it? An external nostalgic experience, on the other hand, includes every kind of nostalgia that is not related to one's personal past. The definitions of internal and external, thus, are not reflections of how much social or private influence the experience contains, but only a marker of when or what we are nostalgic for. If we are nostalgic for antiquity it is clearly external. If we are nostalgic for our childhood home, it is internal. If we watch a film about another planet far away, our nostalgia is external. If another film takes place in our childhood, we are internally nostalgic. Of course, the social interventions in our nostalgia are often higher in external cases than internal.

A well known nostalgic division has been that between private and public nostalgia. I argue that these definitions are definitions of nostalgia as a social, psychological, and political force, and they should not be confused with private experiences. Nevertheless, it is necessary to briefly engage in its history, since our external and internal nostalgia partly depends on them.

The scientific interest in public nostalgia commenced in the later half of the nineteenth century. When early sociologists, like Simmel, became aware of the psychological dimensions of alienation and nostalgia, they started to treat these symptoms more structurally. Sociological work was, for example, done in order to minimize risks for children to develop nostalgia as a reaction to new economics. A study of public nostalgia would deal more with structures and groups than individuals and was built on a multitude of private nostalgias. It also explored the consequences of public nostalgia on the individual, such as nationalism, cultural conformity, and capitalism.

Before researchers became interested in “public” nostalgia though, there had been a gradual shift from private to public nostalgia. One perspective was the institutionalized past that emerged in forms of living past societies, home coming days, and museums (Johannisson 136-37). Also in the bourgeois world the style and space of the summer houses acquired nostalgic artefacts; the evolving butterfly houses and aquariums allowed the myth of nature to invade their artificial lives (Boym 16). Boym cites Walter Benjamin who assessed that the “bourgeois home in nineteenth-century Paris [...] [was] a miniature theater and museum that privatize[d] nostalgia while at the same time replicating its public structure [...]” (Boym 15). The reason for this was, as we have seen, the modern era’s suspicion towards nostalgia, and the need to institutionalize and privatize it in order to control it, a dislocation from individual experience to a collective experience. The negative aspects of public nostalgia were evident already in this shift. Boym demonstrates this clearly by stating that ruins of the past before were “fragments that carry ‘age value’” and allowed “one to experience historicity affectively, as an atmosphere, a space for reflection on the passage of time” (15).

The private nostalgic past, studied as private nostalgias in recent criticism, has been regarded as something positive. Johannisson concludes in her book that nostalgia is in its modern sense about “the subjective time kept inside a larger feeling of passing time. Its triumph is that it allows the individual to long for and fantasize about the own self in a stream of images, experiences, bodily reminders, moods, associations and vague reminiscences in order to communicate with one’s own life story” (159). From a psychological point of view, this subjective time in relation to clock time is a crucial component in understanding the world and the subjective self. Boym similarly defends this private nostalgia: “There is, after all, something pleasantly outmoded about the very idea of longing. We long to prolong our time, to make it free, to daydream, against all odds resisting external pressures and flickering computer screens” (xix). Also Davis shares this view in what he names *continuity of identity*: “nostalgia [...] is deeply implicated in the sense of who we are, what we are about, and [...] whither we go. In short, nostalgia is one of the means—or, better, one of the more readily accessible psychological lenses—we employ in the never ending work of constructing, maintaining, and reconstructing our identities” (Davis 31).

Public nostalgia since the 1960s, on the other hand, has been considered either too popular or commercial as well as a literary weakness or a danger in obscuring historicity. Fredric Jameson posits nostalgia as an eclectic cannibalism of past styles and more dangerously a deceitful and commercial historicism (Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* 18-30). Similarly, Jean Baudrillard detests the quest for the past, declaring its economical and non-artistic qualities and defining, in accordance with Jameson, its lack of critical edge – its pastiche qualities (194-99). This is all in order since public nostalgia has been in close company with

expressions of late capitalism and nationalism. There are few markets today that are not dependent on nostalgia as a marketing strategy. Advertisements incorporate nostalgic music, films, studio design in television, and typography in magazines. Every novel year of fashion refurbishes a past decade, be it the 1950s or the 1970s. Furthermore, no one denies the connection between, for example, the autocracies of Stalin or Hitler and their use of public mythical nostalgia in favour for establishing and maintaining their own particular nationalisms, or the USA's constant striving after the pseudo creation of a mythic past.

From a more sociological perspective, there have also been voices supporting the positive aspects of public nostalgia, such as escapism from the burdened present (Gabriel) and reinforcing cultural stability and a sense of belonging (Baumeister and Leary). Furthermore, the external nostalgia does not have to be part of the public nostalgia; it can be a very individual yearning for a time or place outside one's own memory, such as a fictional place.

Internal nostalgia, then, refers to memories from the individual's own past, his own lived experience, what we will name *memorial nostalgia*. In our analyses of the nostalgias, we will widen this description by including also the longing for personal space, which we will call *spatial nostalgia* and nostalgia for the present, *hypothetical nostalgia*. However, the memorial nostalgia is Davis' only criteria for nostalgia when he denies any other possibilities for the experience but a personal one (Davis 8). Kimberly K. Smith is more diplomatic; she acknowledges the possibilities of external pasts, but denies future-oriented nostalgia (508). Thus, there is no consensus in the matter. Santesso declares, "Nostalgia today is no longer simply a synonym for homesickness: we can be 'nostalgic' for hula hoops and ancient

Greece; we can be 'nostalgic' for homes we never had and states we never experienced" (14), and Merleau-Ponty articulates it beautifully as "a past that has never been a present" (242). Davis insists that "the past which is the object of nostalgia must in some fashion be a personally experienced past rather than one drawn solely, for example, from chronicles, almanacs, history books, memorial tablets, or for that matter, legend" (8). He prefers to call such feelings antiquarian rather than nostalgic (8-9). It is a weary debate to enter, since apparently people *do* feel nostalgic about non-lived pasts, and we prefer to have a more liberated view on the matter of external nostalgia, especially since it is important in relation to literature.

External nostalgia will then mean an individual response to a place or time one has not experienced in life, what Arjun Appadurai calls "nostalgia without memory" (30). It also includes the future-oriented nostalgias such as utopias, myths, and fictional worlds.

Merleau-Ponty separates the external pasts into two categories: the "immemorial past" a past that cannot be remembered and as such is metaphysical rather than epistemological, and one where the past is a "world as perceived" in which the past is not historical or specific in time, such as childhood (Merleau-Ponty 364-65). The immemorial past we divide into two categories: *ontological* and *metaphysical*. The "world as perceived," when it is either temporally vague, or includes a memory that does not exist but feels like one, we prefer to call *pseudo-memorial*. However, the borders between the external categories are not as strict as in the internal categorization, and cross-overs are certain to be found, especially in terms of fictional memories.

The distinctive difference between internal and external nostalgia lies much in concepts of subjective time. External nostalgia usually requires a "shared" time belonging not only to clock time, but also to a whole

institutional architecture such as art and religion, as well as political, social, and economical powers (Agacinski 46). What will be referred to as external nostalgia changes according to history and politics, whereas internal nostalgia resides outside this social framework. Important is also that external nostalgia does not include a personal loss, since it is outside memory. The loss can be just as real, or strong, if the external nostalgia symbolizes something that will never be fulfilled.

It is worthwhile, finally, to distinguish what we mean with an “idealized memory” and if this idealization is different if it is an internal or external nostalgia. According to general perception, the memorial component in nostalgia rarely includes sad memories but rather prefers to refer to the happy ones. If memories in reality were not happy, they often undergo an idealization, and the negative values are lost while the positive are enhanced.

It might be argued that when nostalgia is not a longing for a personal memory, this qualification is meaningless. The glittering and charged realities of our nostalgias, however, appear likewise in both internal and external nostalgia. In the internal cases, the idealization is based on psychological mechanisms that filter out the bad memories and retain the good ones. In external nostalgia, this selection is a conscious process from the one who creates the bases for our experience, often inclined using clichés and well established tropes. I think that, in terms of internal nostalgia, the emphasis on the idealized nature of the nostalgic longing is overrated. First, there are degrees in how much or little this idealization works and it seems to have to do more with the nature of the emotional state and the vividness of the experience, together with human forgetfulness, than an actual idealization. It is in the selective nature, not the idealizing, of the nostalgia that it differs from pure memory; in order for the bittersweet effect to take



place in the reflectory phase, it has to be a nostalgia, a selection, that reminds us of the positive aspects of reality of life, feelings that are “infused with imputations of past beauty, pleasure, joy, satisfaction, goodness, happiness, love, and the like, in sum, any or several of the *positive* affects of being” (Davis 14). Second, the nostalgia is strongly linked to the disillusioned present, from which one departs, even flees, and must as such be measured with an equally biased reality. It is better to refer to, like Davis, “[t]he ‘special’ past of nostalgia” that we “juxtapose [...] to certain features of our present lives” (Davis 13).

We can now summarize our ideas of nostalgia and illustrate them accordingly in the figure below:

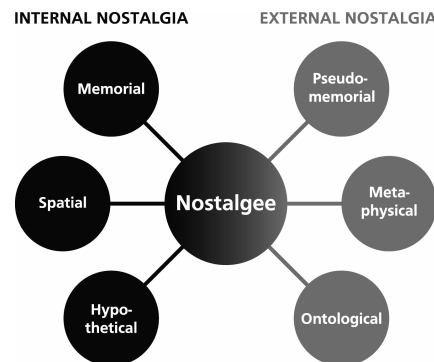


Fig.5. The different Nostalgias.

## Internal Nostalgia

### Memorial Nostalgia

The internal past, a past which is grounded in the individual's own experience, memory and history, is obviously the most common type of

nostalgia and will be called *memorial nostalgia*. We hear a song that triggers a memory of a past event that we cherish and long for. We study the old photo album of our adolescence and remember what once was and is no more with sadness. Sometimes the nostalgia is specific and passing, but often it is more general, as in Wayne Gretzky's observation below, which does not *only* refer to a single event but also several events creating a whole memory of a vague temporal distinction or an ambience of a life époque:

My last game in New York was my greatest day in hockey [...] Everything you enjoy about the sport of hockey as a kid, driving to practice with mom and dad, driving to the game with mom and dad, looking in the stands and seeing your mom and dad and your friends, that all came together in that last game in New York (Wayne Gretzky qtd. in Morrison 66)

There has been some debate regarding the duration between the present state and the past state of memory, or in Davis' words: "how far past must past be before it is experienced as past?" (Davis 11). It is, of course, impossible to structure and organize this in a scheme; is a day too little but one month enough? If there is a nostalgic reaction, then the duration is not relevant. It is, as Davis observes, maybe more important to take into consideration subjective time, or Bergsonian *durée*, which considers the subjective time as relevant in relation to clock time or mechanical time (Davis 11).

In addition to involuntary activity, we in adult age voluntarily search for those places in our youth that were meaningful and magical, and if we try to recover them by visiting them we are vastly disappointed. "It just does not look the same," we say when we approach our old family house. "I don't remember this tree." This is usually the case; time's firm destructive nature

performs this. It is, however, not always true; sometimes we are perplexed with the lack of change when we return to our past places. This confirms that what we miss is not actually the props and scenography of our pasts but the past itself; the opportunities and choices we had then, which explains why our longings often return to the rites of passage, birth, childhood, early adolescence. The interiors and exteriors of a certain place are nothing more than triggers and motivators for our experience.

### **Spatial nostalgia**

Edward S. Casey asks: “are we not nostalgic about places as well as times?” (361). What we will refer to, when considering a spatial nostalgia, is a longing that is more concentrated to a place, and especially home, than an actual time. Still, it shares much with the memorial nostalgia in relying on past places. If the space is either utopian or anticipated, it will not qualify as spatial but rather ontological or hypothetical.

We can long for a place, but this does not necessarily mean that the longing is a nostalgic one; it might be more like homesickness. Even homesickness can be considered as a sort of nostalgia, especially in conjuncture with space as time, if it is incurable. Hence, “home” and its connotations occupy a dear place in our nostalgic hearts, as thematized endlessly in literature and art. Some of the most vivid and strong nostalgic literature has been produced by exiled writers, who, voluntarily or not, have used their distance from their homes as a force or catalyst of remembrance and loss. In fact, most nostalgic yearnings seem to involve our homes or native soil in one way or another. Spatial nostalgia is the longing of exiles, emigrants, and refugees.

In order to fully understand this relationship we can briefly return to the original meaning of Hofer's medical term. At first glance, the Swiss soldiers' yearning for their beloved Alps seems like nothing more than homesickness and will not qualify as nostalgia in the modern sense. Their *heimweh* preserves the initial phase of the nostalgic reaction, with motivators such as milk, soup, cow bells, souvenirs, or folk music, and these motivators create a sense of loss and longing for their native soil. This loss and longing, however, is curable; once back home the strong symptoms of nostalgia become weak or vanish altogether. Perhaps we should benefit from distrusting Hofer's analysis; maybe it really was nostalgia these soldiers experienced. Naturally, being in military service far from home under the reign of French or Spanish armies created feelings of homesickness. We can derive three observations from the soldiers' experiences.

First, in the seventeenth century space was still time, even before Einstein. The distance of hundreds of miles between the Swiss soldiers and their homes would actually equal tremendously long times in travel. If they stayed in military service for a long time, chances were considerable that there had been significant changes to their homes in family related issues such as births and deaths as well as other relationships such as love and friendship. The home they longed for was surely not the home they would face, but one that did not exist anymore; even though changes were not as rapid in those days.

Second, the change does not only occur at home, but also in the person who returns. When Paul Bäumer returns to his hometown during a short leave from the trenches at the Western Front in Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues* [All Quiet on the Western Front] (1929), he finds everything changed, when in reality it is he who is changed.

Finally, and most importantly, as Johannisson so thoroughly argues, home does not only mean the actual space where one's family lives, but rather alludes to a variety of ideas and feelings such as security, identity, community, and belonging that have temporal implications (33). Casey notices that in the case of Ulysses, Ithaca is "less a particular geographical site [...] than it is a world, a way of life, a mode of being-in-the-world" (363).

When the Danish poet Hartvik laments on his departure from Copenhagen, bound on a one-way journey over the Atlantic, his words become emblematic of these observations. It is his home he recollects, but the real loss, as he already recognizes, is his youth. And if he ever returns, he knows he will be a different man:

Long he stands at the rail looking back. He sees the last glimpse of Copenhagen disappear; the green-clad banks of the coast glide past and are lost to view; as Kronborg passes he is seized by a strange melancholy, an oppressive sadness, which he cannot explain.

He knows that this is the last he will see of Denmark for many years, perhaps forever.

All the best and most glorious memories of his life sweep past him now – yes, even more – it is his very youth that calls to him and bids him farewell.

He clutches the rail and feel his eyes grow dim, and his heart swells with a hot and violent wave of longing – a first feeling of homesickness – the need to clasp it all in his embrace. (qtd. in Skårdal 65-66)

If nostalgia, as Johannisson suggests, means separation, then there is no greater nostalgia than during times of migration and exodus.<sup>29</sup> The evidence

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<sup>29</sup> Johannisson enumerates several cases of migrations over the times for different reasons: poverty, political, religious, and ethnical persecution, industrialization and urbanization, wars (35).

of the homesickness of the exiles is endless. According to Dorothy Skårdal as much as three quarters of all newspaper poetry in the US in the times of migration were about longing for home (264). The Atlantic crossing, due to its perilous and expensive nature, usually meant separation from loved ones and home for ever.

Nostalgia, of course, becomes stronger the more unsatisfactory the new situation appears in comparison with what was left. Additionally, for refugees, whose moves are out of necessity, the nostalgia can be graver than for chosen exiles such as travellers, adventurers, or emigrants. The longer the time that passes between the departure and the remembrance the greater the impossibility of a return to familiar grounds. Then, fortunately, nostalgia appears as a rescuing angel in the disguise of souvenirs, such as old Karl Oskar's map in Vilhelm Moberg's *Sista brevet till Sverige* [*The Last Letter Home*] (1959):

It was a map of Ljuder parish. It was his home district that was spread before him here on the blanket. Charles O. Nelson always had the map handy, was always eager to look at the thick, heavy paper with a miniature of his home village. [...]

Here before him he had his whole home parish with well-marked borders, from Lake Laen in the north to Lake Loften in the south. Across this paper his index finger found the markings, followed the roads he once had walked, stopped at places he knew well, familiar names of farms and cottages. Here was the crossroads where he had danced in his youth, the grove where they had celebrated sunrise picnics, wastelands where he had hunted, lakes, rivers, and brooks where he had fished. He followed lines and curves, he stopped at squares and triangles. There was so much to look for, so much to find. And at each place where his finger

stopped his memories awakened: This was his childhood and youth. (212-13)

Perhaps maps, what Stewart calls miniatures in their capacity to withhold our nostalgic desires for that “other” domestic place (37-69), play an important part as memorative representative souvenirs in recalling places rather than times, and it does not matter if they are maps, photos of places, or other kinds of microcosms.

The longing for the lost home, in its internal context is a wish to return to something real and biographical. This impulse might be a self-deceiving one, since places and people change, even if we don’t consciously think they do. An important distinction has to be made: when the return home cures the symptoms of loss and longing and when separation becomes unification, it has to be called homesickness and not nostalgia because one of the fundamental aspects of the nostalgic experience is its incurability. We have seen that the basic motifs of a nostalgic experience reside already here: the motivations, the dissatisfaction with the present situation in a clearly defined now and then, and melancholia triggered by separation and distance. Even though the home is a geographical place, it also has emotional connotations. These connotations are still connected to the individual’s history and life, internalized as such, but can also be of a more symbolic, metaphysical character as we will discover when we discuss the metaphysical external nostalgia later.

### **Hypothetical Nostalgia**

Dissolution of time, as we will see in the poem “A Une Passante” and the future-oriented nostalgia in *Der Zauberberg*, is an essence of nostalgia since the nostalgic experience and its melancholia rest upon the fact that the

present is the past of the future; that our experiences, feelings, and thoughts during the course of a split second irrevocably belong to history. This dissolution of time we would like to call *hypothetical time*, borrowing the term from Gary Saul Morson: “In hypothetical time, the entire sequence of past, present, and future comes for one reason or another to seem insubstantial. It is as if real time were in some other dimension, to which we have no access; as if our lives were a dream and real life were something we can only dream of” (214). The dissolution of time is also the core of Mark Currie’s book *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* (1997) where he argues for a future-oriented un-tensed time which is not based on the distinction between past, present, and future in favour of a more traditional tensed time (15). The hypothetical a-temporal quality of nostalgia can sometimes coexist with the use of less time specific descriptions of the past such as “the good old days” or “our time at college.”

The title of Boym’s book is *The Future of Nostalgia* and one of her theses is that our present is, in fact, a direct result of our past dreams or past generations’ dreams: “Nostalgia is not always about the past; it can be retrospective but also prospective. Fantasies of the past determined by needs of the present have a direct impact on realities of the future” (Boym xvi). If we are reminded of this fact, that our present is the past of the future, we can feel nostalgic about a present moment before it actually becomes a past moment. Boym uses as an example Baudelaire’s poem “A Une Passante” [“In Passing”] from *Les Fleurs du Mal* [*Flowers of Evil*] (1857) about “love at last sight”<sup>30</sup>, where the narrator passes a woman and later regrets what could have been: “Elsewhere! Too far, too late, or never at all! / Of me you know nothing, I nothing of you – you / whom I might have loved and who knew it

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<sup>30</sup> Coined by Walter Benjamin.



too!" (Baudelaire, *Le Fleurs de Mal* 98). It is a present moment but "might have loved" includes first future tense and then past tense at the same time; it is nostalgia not for the future, nor for the past, but for the possibilities of the present.

Less a-temporal, still hypothetical, is the nostalgia in Hans Castorp's introspection in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* [*The Magic Mountain*] (1924):

But on the whole he was sound and fit, an adequate tennis player and rower; though actually handling the oars was less to his taste than sitting of a summer evening on the terrace of the Uhlenhorst ferry-house, with a good drink before him and the sound of music in his ears, while he watched the lighted boats, and the swans mirrored in the bright water. (29)

The nostalgia is echoed in the summer with distant music and swans in the water, but there is also something nostalgic about his anticipation of a future voyage stimulated by the boats. I think we can find this peculiar version of nostalgia when we wait in places of transition such as harbours, airports, and train stations. Perhaps it is connected to the romantic idea about the poetic journey *away* (as opposed to the journey home) as means of distantly observing the passage of time. Or is it the actual symbols of transition and movement that encourage one to anticipate the future of nostalgia?

The journey away touches upon the idea of the disillusioned present, just like the journey home. It is usually considered the opposite of nostalgia and is termed *apodemialgia*, derived from the Greek words *apo* (away) and *demios* (people), and with the same ending as in nostalgia, *algia* (pain). The equivalence in German is *fernweh*. In English we have not yet coined a term for this experience. However, as we have argued, we should not look at

apodemialgia as the opposite of nostalgia but rather as a version of nostalgia.

We categorize hypothetical nostalgia as internal, even though strictly speaking it is not part of a person's biography. It is easy to parallel the dissolution of time, or future-oriented anticipations, with myths, utopias or fictional objects of nostalgia, or what we call external nostalgia. However, we think the nature of the hypothetical nostalgia is that it includes not elements of fantasy or illusions but rather a time in or out of one's own perceptive limitations. The "love at last sight" is triggered by a factual meeting, a personal encounter. Likewise, Hans Carstorp's shipping dreams are within the realms of his actual and personal future.

## **External Nostalgia**

### **Pseudo-memorial Nostalgia**

As we have been arguing, the past of our nostalgic experience does not have to be personal. Thousands of Swedes yearn for the Christmas portrayed in Ingmar Bergman's *Fanny och Alexander* [*Fanny and Alexander*] (1982) when they watch it on television every year, yet it is a Christmas that never existed, neither in reality nor in the living experience of the audience. It is more of a "Victorian" dream, but as such it still manages to create a mood of nostalgia for those who watch it; it is the Christmas *par excellence*. This is pseudo-memorial nostalgia.

The external past of a pseudo-memorial nostalgic experience is a past that does not belong to the nostalgist's own life history. It is not a complete fantasy, because then we will call it a metaphysical past. It is a "real" past, just not a past experienced by the nostalgist, such as a nostalgia for the age of Napoleon or Antiquity.

However, one can argue that the past of a film is not a “real” past, but a constructed one. If we yearn for a past that is not our own, it is rarely a past that has any foundation in somebody else’s true memory, but rather a past constructed through different media whether those are film or historical accounts. The difference between the metaphysical and pseudo-memorial past is the degree of possibility that this is the way the past once looked.

As noted, there is no consensus as to whether the external past has the capacity to be a nostalgia or not, but the significant problems are rather problems of historicity. In reconstructing the past, questions of who and why emerge together with the reality of this past. “The list is not a list of facts or historical realities (although its items are not invented and are in some sense ‘authentic’),” Jameson writes in *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, “but rather a list of stereotypes, of ideas of facts and historical realities” (279). This is why we choose to call this nostalgia *pseudo-memorial*, since it has the capacity of inflicting itself together with a true personal memory; who knows in the end what actually is a memory or pseudo-memory? The use of clichés and stereotypes is important in falsifying and exaggerating our own memories and in idealizing the past. Perhaps the idealization is the core of the pseudo-memorial experience, since it has to both convince the nostalgee that this is almost an experienced memory and reinforce the marketing values included in its commercial use. In terms of life experience, it can correspond in unusual cases completely with a fictional experience.

### **Metaphysical Nostalgia**

Metaphysical external nostalgia is a nostalgia where the object of nostalgia is grounded in human existence but used metaphorically or symbolically to

convey a bigger idea – a metaphysical idea, a melancholic state of mind in relation to death versus life. This is a kind of nostalgia we encounter in Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard":

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a moul'ring heap,  
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,  
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,  
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed. (112)

This attitude played an exceptional part in the poetry and theories of the romantics. Santesso writes that "the history of nostalgia in eighteenth-century poetry suggests that nostalgia, then and now, is not a desire for the past per se; nor is it ever an emotion rooted in empirical reality or concrete autobiography. Rather, it is a longing for objects that are idealized, impersonal, and unattainable" (16). There is a link between the individual's life story, in the sense that the metaphors used mostly are derived from vague, not exact, situations such as childhood, birth, spring. Therefore, the externality of the nostalgia sometimes borders, or commingles, with internal memories.

As we have seen with the anti-progress quality of the internal memorial nostalgia, the metaphorical external nostalgia resembles it in its sadness about the irreversibility of time. For Johannisson, the difference between the two regarding this shift is that the romantics<sup>31</sup> tend to see

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<sup>31</sup> Johannisson refers mostly to German Romanticism and writers such as Novalis and Heinrich Heine. Boym also speaks of the German romantics, usually the early Sturm und

nostalgia as “an existential basic condition, colored by melancholia, which is about everything’s mortality, the constant present loss” (23). The places of Hofer’s homesickness became the metaphysical places of our inner lives and as such resemble the Greek particular of nostalgia, named *pothos* – a return to metaphysical origins (Casey 370).

As nostalgia changed from a space to a time, it also became more external in the sense that the symbols and metaphors of the artists became conventions of nostalgia rather than the earlier internal memorials of true biography or space. These conventions are mostly universal but we observe, for example, an alternation in the symbols of home depending on our culture: for the Russians it seems like home is their soil, the Scandinavians prefer nature, and the Americans prefer the family (Johannisson 33).

This does not mean that the experience in itself becomes more externalized, but rather the opposite; the romantics favoured a correspondence between these conventions and the inner landscape of humans; it was just that these conventions were more universal. Boym makes a division between Enlightenment’s Universality and the romantics’ obsessions with the particular (11-12). It is true that the romantics became interested in local manners, folk songs, traditions, and the particularity of local cultures and later in primitivism. They used this particularity indeed to create a universal nostalgia by conventionalize these particulars into symbols that were used and reused in art. Boym also confirms this, and emphasizes the importance of distance in evaluating the particular: “It is the romantic traveler who sees from a distance the wholeness of the vanishing world. The journey gives him perspective. The vantage point of a stranger informs the

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Drang movement and their reaction to the age of Enlightenment. However, the idea of universal nostalgia (below) is equally applicable to the English romantics as demonstrated by Santesso (see page 243).

native idyll. The nostalgic is never a native but a displaced person who mediates between the local and the universal" (12). Initiated by Rousseau's savage, "Home" became either a longing for a prior existence before the age of revolution and industrialization, or in Hart's words: "The nostalgic return to childhood is a return to the aurora of springtime, the dawn of hope" (408).

This means that in metaphysical nostalgia we experience a strong interest in the unspoiled and natural child or a world associated with this child's innocence and freedom. It also signifies symbolically a return to nature, with the consequence of celebrating the beauty and magic of the cosmos. In its most radical interpretation, it also means a Freudian desire to return to the mother or the womb.

Gregory Nagy tracks the origins of the Greek *nostos* back to the Indo-European root *nes*, which means return to light and life, and interprets Odysseus' return to Ithaca as a metaphor about human fate, human loss and renewal: "the theme of Odysseus's descent and subsequent *nostos* (return) from Hades converges with the solar dynamics of sunset and sunrise. The movement is from dark to light, from unconsciousness to consciousness. In fact the hero is asleep as he floats in darkness to his homeland and sunrise comes precisely when his boat reaches the shores of Ithaca." (219).

### **Ontological Nostalgia**

There is another space/time for longing that we categorize as a utopian, mythical or fictive time outside the temporal reality. Hart notes that the "character of the nostalgic world resembles the time of the mythic world" (406-07). Hart continues by naming these utopian and mythical nostalgic places "ontological" (408), a term very suitable for a nostalgia that is preoccupied with "the other world" or another temporality. The utopian time

corresponds with the mythical time in the sense of its idealized character and its escapism. "The time of the mythic world is that of the founding powers and deeds of the great supernatural beings whose activities are the exemplary model for all significant human activities [...] It is a time which is generally designated as golden and paradisaal because all idealizations of the actual present are there realized" (Hart 411). As found in metaphysical nostalgia, these paradises are often heavily idealized to contrast with reality. An example is found in Roy Orbison's popular song *Blue Bayou*:

I'm going back some day, gonna stay on Blue Bayou  
Where the folks are fine and the world is mine on  
Blue Bayou  
Oh, that girl of mine by my side the silver moon and  
the evening tide  
Oh, some sweet day gonna take away this hurting  
Inside  
I'll never be blue, my dreams come true on Blue  
Bayou.

Here the "folks are fine" and "dreams come true." As derived from the meaning of utopia, the ontological universe is the perfect universe.

Other paradises exist as well. We can observe it in the religious literature of Romanticism where a longing for home is interchanged with longing for paradise. Johannisson exemplifies this with a quote from the German mystic Heinrich Jung-Stilling's novel *Homesickness*: "Blest be those who have homesickness, for they shall come home" (qtd. in Johannisson 22).

In utopia we find a sort of *pastness* as is seen in the biblical paradise with its references to Eden, the Greeks' and Romans' desire for their Golden Age, the Aztecs' wish for the return of their God, and Ancient peoples' conceptions of Elysium. In the utopian ideal of the future, an aspect of the

virginal dreams of the past always resides, involving a return to myths or a former culture prior to industrialization such as the Middle Ages or Antiquity. In a sense, this contradicts the ideas of linear time, since many of these myths rely on the circularity of connecting origins with endings.

Ontological nostalgia shares much with some of the essentials of nostalgia: a wish for immortality and the disillusionment of the present. Sylvia Mary Darton writes in *Nostalgia for Paradise* (1965) that the “memory of a ‘lost’ paradise’ has never ceased to haunt the minds of men, arousing in them a mysterious ‘nostalgia’, a longing for some perfection, some happiness, freedom and complete sense of well being of which it feels itself to have been deprived” (13).

In the worlds of ontological nostalgia, we encounter reused symbols that are derived from the different paradise myths: the tree, the river, water in general, and the garden. Many of these symbols are to be seen in the metaphysical nostalgia as well.

The fictional universes of film or literature can be seen in a strict sense as ontological and can be objects for longing. If these fictive worlds are more or less realistic, they can be considered as being part of establishing pseudo-memories. However, if they have more fantastic or science-fiction ambitions, such as Middle Earth in Tolkien’s fantasies, they seem to be more ontological in the sense that they border with ideas of myth.

The ontological nostalgias have a-temporal qualities since they are outside clock time and temporally vague. They are perhaps more related to the early notions of nostalgia, where, as we have seen, space was more important than time.



## Reflection

### The Bittersweet Reflective Phase

Nostalgia could be envisioned as a bonbon with a sweet cover and a bitter core, and if we suck it long enough we will experience a transition from sweet to bitter, which concludes in the melancholic bittersweet. The bittersweet conclusion is the reflective phase in the nostalgic reaction.

The reflective phase is in many ways a counter procedure to the two earlier phases. It is in this phase that nostalgia gains its unique set of qualities. It is a bipolarity of oppositions that create that particular nostalgic feeling and separates it from memory. Boym brilliantly conceives this bipolarity as a cinematic double exposure or “a superimposition of two images – of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life” (xiii-xiv). Stewart, in her analyses of the souvenir points out most importantly that it is in “the gap between resemblance and identity that nostalgic desire arises. The nostalgic is enamored of distance, not of the referent itself. Nostalgia cannot be sustained without loss” (Stewart 145). Starobinski equally considers the relation of the referent “to a partial presence which causes one to experience, with pleasure and pain, the imminence and the impossibility of complete restoration of this universe which emerges fleetingly from oblivion” (Starobinski 93).

Besides the gap between the reality of the referent and the loss of nostalgia we find, in the transition from happiness of the selected memory to the melancholia of its reflective phase, Starobinski’s “pleasure and pain.” If we consider the illustration of *The Nature of Emotions* (below) by Robert Plutchik, we realize that this feeling of contrasting emotions is supported by

Plutchik's positioning of feelings in his wheel of nature of emotions. The emotions on one side of the wheel correspond with the ones that are its neighbours and contrast with the ones on the opposite side. The warm emotions of the nostalgia, serenity, joy, and ecstasy are all contrasted with the cold emotions that arise out of the reflective part: grief, sadness, and pensiveness. In this frontal crash lies the wreckage of lost dreams and memories.

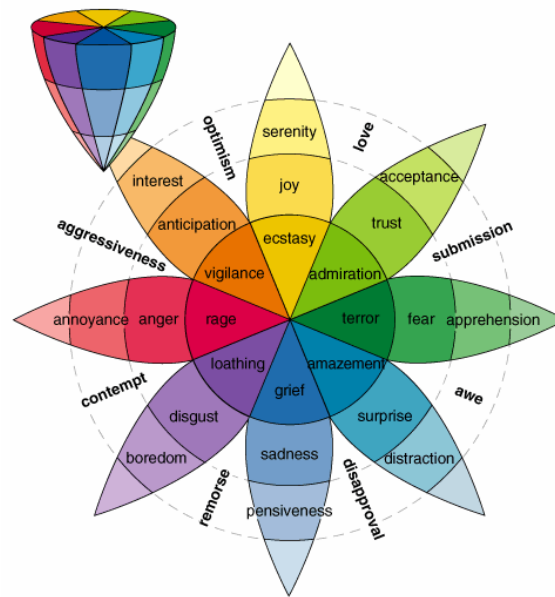


Fig. 6. The Nature of Emotions by Robert Plutchik.

Similarly, the nostalgic experience dwells on the antagonism between two temporal states, the present and the other. The reaction is triggered within the present state, and, at least partly and subconsciously, triggered as a reaction to the present state, whether it is dissatisfaction, fear, or general unpleasantness. The present state then gives way to the nostalgia of another temporality, which contrasts in many ways, through idealization or selection

with the present. We can speak of a distinct now and then (deliberately vague) or perhaps even a here and there.

The emotional strength of the reflection is really what Davis touches upon when he divides the nostalgic experience into three categories: "Simple Nostalgia," Reflexive Nostalgia," and "Interpreted Nostalgia" (17-26) where the order of them signifies their quantitative aspects. The "Simple Nostalgia" is uncritically enhanced by the "'Beautiful Past'" and the "'Unattractive Present'" (18). The emotional response is strong. The reflexive nostalgic experience is still an emotional one, but it is contrasted by a certain critical consciousness about the idealized past (21). Finally, "Interpreted Nostalgia" creates a problem with the whole emotional reaction by objectifying and deromanticizing it (24). The ascending order of the three categories suggests a shift from emotional to intellectual response. To simplify, a nostalgic person would supposedly be inclined to "Simple Nostalgia" whereas the sceptic more towards "Interpreted Nostalgia." This division is interesting, but I think it has several faults. "Simple Nostalgia" is an experience, but the experience of nostalgia is not complete, when it lacks the reflective aspect. It is more like the French *moment bienheureux*, which means a "very happy, or blissful" memory. "Interpreted Nostalgia" is also not a complete experience, since it denies its object an emotional response. "Reflexive Nostalgia," however, agrees more with what we consider a nostalgic experience. The unreflective memory, the "idealized" sensation and longing for the past, has to be contrasted with the notion of this past's non capturable and fleeting character. Otherwise, we could not call the experience bittersweet.

Instead of Davis' division, we would like to talk about a basic nostalgic reaction and a complex one, considering a spread from one to the other in the intensity of the reflective phase. The more complex the reaction

is, the longer its duration. A basic nostalgic experience will have a short but strong emotional impact, whereas a more complex one might have a longer nostalgic phase with a more consequential reflection. To me a basic reflection seems to keep the joyfulness from the nostalgia better than the more complex ones.

In tracking the actions of the phases of *motivation* and *nostalgia*, there is much in common with a plain joyful memory, except that it does not always have to be a memory. It is the last leg, the reflective part, of the nostalgic reaction that makes it nostalgic. The nostalgic experience is concluded by a combination of reflection upon the place or time for the longing (the nostalgia) in relation to its demise, and the unique affection of loss and sadness that follows this reflection and contrasts with the prior joy and happiness.

## The Nostalgic Mood

Hart writes that, even though death is not considered part of nostalgia it is nevertheless related “to times recalled by nostalgia, because it is the most complete expression that these golden times are irretrievably lost to us” (407). It is peculiar that Freud’s *oeuvre* is remarkably devoid of explicit mention of nostalgia, even though its main focus is of the personal past’s importance in our presence.<sup>32</sup> It seems, like Casey suggests, that nostalgia

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<sup>32</sup> According to Casey, the only time Freud uses a word in family with nostalgia is in the Appendix A to “The Interpretation of Dreams” in the Standard Edition: “She may then have quite well had a nostalgic dream one night which took her back to the old days” (Freud, “The Interpretation of Dreams” 624). However, Freud wrote this essay already 10 November 1899 and in the German original he does not, as the English translation suggests, use the words “nostalgic dream” but “sehnsuchtstraum” which corresponds

“has been driven into the underworld of the unconscious, where it survives under the metapsychological rubric of ‘internalization.’” ( 371). However interesting Casey’s study is in explaining the link between Freud’s theories of regression and fixation<sup>33</sup>, Casey’s theories seem, in their total dependence on the unconscious, to be relatively far from how we see nostalgic emotion but closer to that of nostalgic mood.

In comparison to nostalgic emotion, nostalgic mood is less cognitive and more of a subtle background state, which means that we experience a sensation or sensations. These might very well be complex and physical, but the actual chain of emotional and cognitive events, such as described in the nostalgic reaction, is incomplete. There will be a motivator of some sort, but in the nostalgic emotion this motivator can be either voluntary or involuntary whereas the motivator in the nostalgic mood is undeniably involuntary. In the nostalgic mood there is more of a sense of flow or gradual awareness of a state of affection. I think, in most cases though, the motivators described before will be suitable also in the case of nostalgic mood. The most important difference is the lack of an obvious *nostalgia*, an object for the nostalgic experience. During a nostalgic emotion we often quite clearly can specify what we are nostalgic about. This appears more diffuse in the event of nostalgic mood, probably due to the lower cognitive aspect of the experience. However, there is great deal of overlap between emotion and mood and no real consensus on how to use the terms. The most common definition is that

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more generally to a dream of longing for something (Freud, “Eine ertsällte Traumahnung” 22).

<sup>33</sup> Additionally, Freud regards the past as a burden, or oppression, requiring liberation whereas admirers of nostalgia sees the past as liberating from the oppressed presence. Nevertheless, Freud’s ideas might play a significant part of the total complexity of the nostalgic experience, especially repression, since it is directly connected to the idea of our selected memory.

mood usually implies a longer time than an emotion and is of a lower intensity. A typical example is that of feeling fear (emotion) when seeing a dog rapidly approaching and being in a state of anxiety (mood) for a while after the dog has disappeared (Thayer 14). We will, however, not judge emotions or mood in aspects of time or intensity, since we believe that moods can occur in quite small temporal segments and that valuing the intensity of an experience is both a fragile business and not necessary for our needs. In order to simplify things, we will use the term *mood* when a nostalgic experience is lacking a *conscious* motivator, a precisely defined nostalgia and a cognitive reflection.<sup>34</sup> Just as in the story of the dog, there might be a correlation between nostalgic emotions and moods in the sense that a nostalgic mood is triggered by a nostalgic emotion.

The affective content of the nostalgic mood is very similar to what is gained from the dualism of emotions discussed earlier, the bittersweet mixture of joy and sadness with an emphasis on one of them that constitutes whether the mood is positive or negative. This might seem to contrast research that shows that we often speak of mood as being either “good” or “bad” as in being in a good or bad mood (Thayer 15). If we connect this to the positive or negative general interpretation of the mood this opinion still seems valid, but what about the two contrasting emotions? One of Robert E. Thayer’s main theories about moods is that they are indeed built up of a combination and interaction of two separate moods, what he names *energetic* and *tense moods* (110-36). Overtly simplified, the energetic mood (positive/high arousal) tends to activate the person and the tense mood (negative/low arousal) to calm him. The multidimensional arousal model, as

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<sup>34</sup> There are several studies that show that moods are not as separated from thinking as might be expected. See Nowlis and Green (1965) and McNair, Lorr & Droppleman (1971).

presented by Thayer, allows for a complex interaction of these apparent contrasting emotional states. One of Thayer's examples accounts for exactly this: "A continuing state of high anxiety would certainly characterize high arousal, and yet the fatigue and tiredness that usually reflect low arousal states is also found in these cases" (115). Although nostalgia is not an anxiety, it seems probable that we can apply Thayer's model also on that of nostalgic mood.

Nostalgia is inevitably tied to a personal teleological, entropic idea that the progress of our lives must end in death. The sense of the nostalgic mood is much the one of *carpe diem*. Nostalgia is not fear of the present: it is fear of death. Our longing back into the past corresponds with our futile endeavours to slow down the life process or retard our eschatology. Hutcheon clearly distinguishes this aspect of nostalgia as "an attempt to defy the end, to evade teleology" ("Nostalgia, and the Postmodern"). To travel back into our subjective time is an uprising against mechanical clock time. Of course, the futility of the project unfolds when we discover that it does not help; this is the bitter part of the nostalgic experience.

The dualism of Nostalgia, as described above, corresponds well with Freud's polarities between life instincts and death instincts (Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" 53). The play between pleasure, *Eros*, and death, *Thanatos*, harmonizes with the two last phases of the nostalgic reaction. The joyfulness (defeating the irreversibility of time, the idealized or selected memory, the life strengthening aspects of the nostalgia) seems to parallel that of the Freudian pleasure principle. Simultaneously, the return to origins can also be integrated in the death drive. Freud writes, backing his observation with the biological science of the times that "the aim of all life is death" and that "organic life [strives] to restore an earlier state of things" (Freud,

“Beyond the Pleasure Principle” 38, 36). He continues by quoting Schopenhauer’s famous remark that death is the “true result and to that extent the purpose of life” (qtd. in Freud, “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” 50).

The dualism between death and life is also observed by Ann C. Colley in *Nostalgia and Recollection in Victorian Culture* (1998) where she connects it to the myth of Orpheus:

It is as if nostalgia roams between the tenor of death and the vehicle of life. Like Orpheus, nostalgia attempts to recover what darkness imprisons so that it might lead what is lost back towards the light of the living present. Nostalgia charms death with its bitter-sweet melodies [...] But, as Orpheus learns, nostalgia can never completely resurrect what it releases. The past can never join the present. [...] Nostalgia, therefore, continually repeats Orpheus’s journey and, thus, knows a double death. (209)

In the nostalgic experience it is the knowledge of our short time, in combination with the strong notion of extinction that initiates the stout sadness of lost time. It can only be regained in our subjective minds, but that is not satisfactory.

The strange sadness of nostalgic mood is seen in Freud’s distinction between mourning and melancholia: mourning is the loss of something real, a person, a place or something equivalent, and it heals in course of time – melancholia is the loss of something abstract and time won’t heal it (Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia” 237-60). In a contradictory way, the abstraction of death embraces life in the nostalgic mood experience. And despite all the



melancholia, it appears to be an experience that nobody wants to be excluded from.

## Chapter Three

### The Nostalgic Fictive Experience

#### The Nostalgic Fictive Experience

We have agreed that narrative art, in its capacity to evoke emotions, and nostalgia should be considered experiences. Can we then speak of a nostalgic fictive experience? Certainly, and the fusion between nostalgic experience and fictive experience is the foundation of this thesis. The use of the word *fictive* should not diminish either its importance or its capacity to evoke emotions, as we have seen in our discussion about the paradox of fiction.

Paul Grainge makes a distinction between “nostalgia mood” and “nostalgic mode.” This distinction should not be confused with the way we defined nostalgia as emotion and mood in chapter two, but rather as a way of dividing the theoretical approach to nostalgia. “The nostalgia mood articulates a concept of experience,” writes Grainge, where “nostalgia is understood as a socio-cultural response to forms of discontinuity, claiming a vision of stability and authenticity in some conceptual ‘golden age.’ This approximates the conventional sense of nostalgia as a yearning” (21). Nostalgic mode, on the other hand, “articulates a concept of style, a representational effect with implications for our cultural experience of the past” (21). Nostalgic mode is derived from Fredric Jameson’s interests in nostalgia as a symptom of commodification and lack of historicity in the postmodern society (Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* 19-20). Since nostalgic mood is based on the very experience of the nostalgee, its essential quality, according to Grainge, deals with loss (21).

Nostalgic mode then is not preoccupied with the actual nostalgic feelings people may experience, but only in the way nostalgia functions in a wider contextual perspective. The emphasis on nostalgic mode as a matter of aesthetic style is confusing, since concepts of style should be valid also in studies of private experiences in art. Furthermore, not all style is working within the framework of political or commercial interests. Still, the distinction provided by Grainge can be useful in illustrating the focus of this thesis.

The key is which question should be answered: the *why*, or the *how*? Even if Jameson's ideas about nostalgia are confined to postmodern times (the idea of how rapid change in our society evokes an interest in the recycled past), they are valid beyond the postmodern era as well. They can equally include the extreme changes of urbanization, migration, and industrialization at the end of the nineteenth century and some way into the twentieth. If the question we desire to answer would be *why* there are very many texts that are nostalgic in the modern period, then nostalgic mode would bring an external perspective to the analysis. How did the modernists react to these rapid changes, to the First World War, to the new theories of Einstein, Bergson, and Freud? In what ways did they provide the audience with an emotional quality such as stability or hermetic space through their use of nostalgia? These are not the questions that we are concerned with. Again, since we are speaking of nostalgic fictive experience, we are first and foremost engaged in *how* certain texts evoke nostalgia in readers. Hence, we are concerned with nostalgic mood, but modified to also incorporate ideas of style and aesthetics. Most of our examples, but not exclusively, date from a time that generally is considered modernism, since this was indeed a time when writers deeply engaged themselves in theories of nostalgia. Looking at

experience means that we abandon any interests in the political and social ways that nostalgia interacts with art, such as Jameson's critical political perspective on the matter or how the idea of nostalgia has fluctuated through history. Furthermore, we will not be bothering with whether a specific author was especially inclined to nostalgia, nor how the public responded to these nostalgic texts. These texts will be used to evaluate how a nostalgic poetics could possibly work from *our* rather limited perspective. This possibly means that a poetics of nostalgia might look quite differently if somebody with other cultural backgrounds would look at other kind of texts. We can presume that certain nostalgic devices will be universal, but others might be very provincial. Neither can we be assured that the contemporary readers of these texts responded in the same way as we do now. Limitations are necessary when dealing with emotions and art, since these emotions are all private experiences in the end, even though we will be using objective tools and a competent reader. The private nature of these experiences, and the analysis of them, should provide a method that also will be useful for analyzing emotions in new perspectives. Once again, we must emphasize that we are dealing with possibilities and probabilities rather than poetic truths.

On a general note, much of the methodology we worked out in chapter one is still valid also in our exploration of nostalgic experience in fiction: first, we must understand what nostalgia is and how it operates before we can investigate what it is in the texts that make us feel nostalgic. Chapter two dissected the nostalgic experience in detail; still it would be informative to summarize its essence in order to more firmly establish what exactly we are looking for. Just like we noticed, in more general words about emotions and art in chapter one, the different and complicated relationships

between author-text-audience have to be nuanced and configured to fit nostalgia, and we have to pinpoint what exactly it is in this experience that we must focus on. We will do this in close collaboration with an analysis of the different ways to approach nostalgia in a comparative examination of two films: George Lucas' *American Graffiti* (1973) and Peter Bogdanovich's *The Last Picture Show* (1971). Although not literature, they are in fact a form of fictional narratives and thus appropriate for a general analysis. They are also, in their capacity as visual arts, easier to relate to in this initial stage. Then, finally, we will close in on literary fiction and draw the maps for our exploration of specific literary nostalgic experiences.

### **The Essence of Nostalgia**

In a strict sense, there are two crucial definitions of nostalgia: one has to do with the dichotomy of *now and then* (and more spatially *here and there*), and the other is concerned with universal grief, the fear of death and progress. The nostalgic efforts from fiction are all based on either one of these or on a set of variations and combinations of them.

The opening sentence in the second chapter of Stephen King's "The Body" reads as follows: "We had a treehouse in a big elm which overhung a vacant lot in Castle Rock" (293). The use of past tense clearly signals a *then*, something that happened subsequent from the narrative point. Is it nostalgic? Hardly, but perhaps the image of a tree house sparks a few internal nostalgic memories in readers. It is definitely a memory, a past. There is, in a sense, a now as well, since we know through the past tense that it is narrated from a fictive now. The next sentence though adds a clear *now* to the experience and adds a valuation: "There's a moving company on that lot today, and the elm is gone" (293). The now of narration is also a time

when the dreams of childhood have vanished physically; gone is the tree and the innocence of childhood. There is something, although not explicitly expressed, sad about this change. The tree house is something positive, the change into a moving company signals regret and sad sentiments, a loss both physically and symbolically. The emotions of the two sentences are then made explicit through the single word that follows: "Progress" (293). I think this constitutes the absolute essentials of nostalgia, the clearly defined and juxtaposed now and then, where the valuation of the then is that something was lost in the past through time's progress into the now. Even though the narrator does not spell out that he is nostalgic, we as readers certainly interpret his narration as sad.

The idea that universal grief is more a mood than an emotion takes the idea of the "evil progress" further. It does not necessarily need the dichotomy of past and present in order to communicate the essential lack of meaning in life. Rather, it tries to abolish the sense of temporality: the present is the past of the future. This grief is a sense of Nietzschean nihilism and entropy where nothing has any value anymore. It is a fleeting mood, a consciousness without time. The idea of *carpe diem* encourages this mood, because the reason we want to live in our present is because life is short and we are soon fertilizing worms. And although this seems to encourage the negative aspect of nihilism, it is the actual nihilism that triggers the idea of living in the moment since nothing else is important, neither our future nor our past. We will call this way of looking at the loss of temporality *hypothetical nostalgia* (see page 134) and it will be discussed in detail later.

The essence of nostalgia will found the basis for most of the discussions that occur in chapters four through six.

### The Non-Textual Nostalgia

First we must dismiss one aspect of nostalgia and art from our analytical approach – that of non-textual nostalgia. Perhaps the most common relation between art and nostalgia is when art is working as a motivator for nostalgic reactions. We hear tunes that spark nostalgic reactions because we either remember what we did when we heard these songs before, or they remind us more generally of a certain time of our lives. There is perhaps not so much nostalgic about the songs themselves; they become more of time markers or time machines. As an example, imagine that we are watching *American Graffiti* (1973) in a small art house cinema in 2012, and it gives us a nostalgic experience. Hypothetically, what are the specifics of our particular experience? Well, it is possible that it triggers memories of a previous viewing, that either contains something lost from that screening (girlfriend, friend, even a personal item, a cinema that has been demolished, a certain person at the box office, a janitor, a smell, the taste of *that* popcorn, or the particular snow that fell that evening) or a more contextual memory (that city, our family, our youth, the work we had then, our student friends, our car: actually anything from the era of the previous viewing). It can also be triggered through epiphenomena, such as the poster outside, reviews, conversations before about the film, trailers and other advertisements. In this sense, there is nothing about the filmic text itself that works as a memorative sign; it is external sources of the art that trigger nostalgic reactions. It could have been any film really. This nostalgia is naturally *internal*, since it relates to our own biography, but at the same time it relates to the *externality* of the text, since it is not the text itself that is responsible for the experience. This would constitute the category 15 that we laid out in chapter one, “Audience

*experience emotions not through the text but the actual experience"* and will not be valuable in our analysis of nostalgic experiences since it is too private.

### **Nostalgic Experience through the Text**

When we have decided to focus on the text, there are several aspects of nostalgic reactions to texts that have to be considered. First, we still have to deal with the difference between *internal* and *external* nostalgia. Second, we have to discuss which part of the textual nostalgia should be our main concern; the representational or the aesthetic.

### **Internal and External Nostalgic Fictive Experiences**

The idea of a division of emotions between internal and external might seem oddly novel, although the issue of the paradox of fiction touches implicitly on the subject. If we connect this discussion to that of internal/external nostalgia, an internal emotion would be an emotion that is closely connected to one's biography, whereas an external emotion would be one that is triggered through art but which does not, in an obvious way, work in ways of private and personal experience. Perhaps this is purely theoretical; is there any emotion that we feel that is not in some way connected to our history and experience? Maybe the overt physical ones. However, nostalgia, as we have seen, works differently since it can both be connected to our own past (internal) and with fantasies about another time and place (external), such as the ontological nostalgia. Are they separable and is this distinction important? Of course, if we are to develop our nostalgic poetics we cannot totally depend on private experience only and our ideas about emotions and aesthetics would be disqualified. Let us look at the categories we constructed



in chapter one that clarified the different attitudes between audience, text and author:

**10** – Audience experience emotions through the text that are part of the fictive world (diegetic) and also in line with the author's intentions.

**11** – Audience experience emotions through the text that are part of the fictive world (diegetic) but *not* in line with the author's intentions.

**12** – Audience experience emotions through the text that are *not* part of the fictive world (non-diegetic) but in line with the author's intentions.

**13** - Audience experience emotions through the text that are *not* part of the fictive world (non-diegetic) and *not* in line with the author's intentions.

**14** – Audience experience emotions through the text in correlation with extra-textual knowledge.

Categories 10 and 11 are quite straightforward; if we feel nostalgic about the text, it does not matter if it is within the author's intentions or not. Since the nostalgic emotions in these categories are working within the fictive world they will be what we name *external*. Category 14 circles the need for the competent reader that we discussed in chapter one. That leaves us category 12 and 13.

Category 12 would point at the sort of internal nostalgic experience that is still triggered intentionally by the author whereas category 13 entails the sort of private, internal nostalgia that is impossible to trace except in individual cases and thus is not interesting to us. Therefore, only category 12 is important to us.

I would like to distinguish between two different types of internal nostalgia. One is inherently private and entails specific biographic memories: my wedding, my first football match, and fishing with Dad. However, there is also another kind of internal nostalgia that is less private, but still within biography, such as weddings, the first time I did something, and moments with your parents. As we see, these are still biographical but less specific and more contextual. These kinds of internal nostalgias, on the other hand, should be available for our analytical process, especially since we have noted that it is of interest to study how art intentionally triggers internal nostalgia. Furthermore, the more contextual internal nostalgia is easier to validate in the analytical interpretation of our experience. We are personal but not private, to use a cliché.

Conclusively, we will be mostly attentive to external nostalgia. However, when internal nostalgia is triggered as part of an established strategy from the author, it is of greatest importance. These strategies then aim for the personal, internal nostalgias that we clearly share contextually, but not in private detail with other people. This approach is fundamental, since addressing our own internal nostalgia through external nostalgia makes the nostalgic experience much stronger and forceful.

### **Art about Nostalgia or Nostalgic Art?**

Considering the classic issue of content and form, perhaps it is wise to make a distinction between *nostalgia in art* and *nostalgic art*. Paul Ricœur talks extensively, inspired by Mendilow, in *Temps et Récit Vol. 2 [Time and Narrative Volume 2]* (1984) about the crucial difference between tales of time and tales about time (101). He writes: “All fictional narratives are ‘tales of time’ inasmuch as the structural transformations that affect the situations and

characters take time. However only a few are ‘tales about time’ inasmuch as in them it is the very experience of time that is at stake in these structural transformations” (101). He means that there are a few novels (modernism and later) that actually give you a phenomenological experience of time, where the actual experience of fictive time is at heart of the work’s themes and meaning (Ricoeur 62). To create a parallel to nostalgia might seem contrived at first, since fiction is always *in* time whereas you cannot say that all fiction is *in* nostalgia. The word *about* is also unfortunate since it could just as well describe fiction that discusses time and does not necessarily give us a temporal fictive experience. If we understand that there is a difference between fiction whose content is about nostalgia and fiction where the experience of the text is nostalgic we make a very important distinction. If we would study Evelyn Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) from the former angle we would look at how the narrator values the nostalgia of Charles Ryder, or how England changed from the innocent *Belle Époque* of pre-war times through two world wars.<sup>35</sup> If we would study it from the latter perspective we would settle on our nostalgic experience of the text and consider what it is in the text that made us nostalgic. It could be that some of the reasons behind our nostalgic experience can be found in the thematics of the novel, but the approach is different. Then, borrowing the analogy from Ricoeur, we will speak of *art about nostalgia* and *nostalgic art*.

It seems that a nostalgic content is less prone to evoke nostalgic experiences than nostalgic aesthetics. Perhaps this is true regarding all emotions expressed through art, but it seems even more so when it comes to nostalgia. Although we are scared of Dracula because of how he is described,

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<sup>35</sup> Although the memories in *Brideshead Revisited* do not reach further back than the 1920s, the book is still thematically obsessed with the ideals and times of the Belle Époque.

we also fear what he represents and what his actions portray. With nostalgia it is different; if a character is nostalgic we do not explicitly experience nostalgia but rather other feelings such as pity or sadness. When we have a nostalgic experience it is rarely content-based. This does not mean that the content is not important; it is just not the most important thing. If we are to explore how nostalgia is evoked, we must focus on aesthetics but not dismiss theories of simulation altogether. Content and representation work as an aid together with the aesthetics; perhaps it is even the content that initiates a process of experiencing art nostalgically. If we read on the back cover text of *Brideshead Revisited* that it is the “most nostalgic and reflective of Evelyn Waugh’s novels” it might open up a consciousness that is prepared for a nostalgic experience.

In chapter one, we acknowledged the aesthetic response to art and how it seemed to play a crucial role in evoking emotions. Nostalgia is not an exception. As mentioned in the introduction, Fred Davis is one of the few who recognises the part aesthetics play in nostalgic art: “So frequently and uniformly does nostalgic sentiment seem to infuse our aesthetic experience that we can rightly begin to suspect that nostalgia is not only a feeling or mood that is somehow magically evoked by the art object but also a distinctive aesthetic modality in its own right” (73). If we regard nostalgia in art as “a distinctive aesthetic modality” rather than a personal emotion, it opens up a field of study that engages us to look into the formalistic aspects of nostalgic experience rather than the internal, private emotions triggered. We will still look at both nostalgic emotions and moods, but from a more specific aesthetic perspective. However, nostalgia is definitely also a more closed and personal emotion than sadness or anger, since it usually is so closely related to one’s own biography. Although we should not dismiss that

other emotions usually engage previous personal emotions of the same kind in a direct relationship, the fundamental element of nostalgia is the past, usually a private past. Thus, even though we approach nostalgia from a more objective, aesthetic perspective, we always have to keep in mind that the nostalgic emotions cooperate deeply with personal biography, and that this internal nostalgia will be interesting for us, as we discussed above.

In order to examine a nostalgic aesthetic in art, we need to focus on the external aspects of a nostalgic experience. In the externality of the experience, we can create a taxonomy of nostalgic textual strategies that seems to work for more than a single person. We must also avoid speculating on private subjective issues. We have to do this, as we have seen, in accordance with the ways external nostalgia plays along with internal nostalgia; some subjects are more subjected to nostalgia depending on the different ways the external aesthetic strategies trigger internal nostalgic memories. This is also supported by Wolfgang Iser when he stresses how the internal experience is “the reader’s incorporation of the text into his own treasure-house of experience [...]” and that this subjective “element of reading comes at a later stage in the process of comprehension [...]” (*The Act of Reading* 24). The strategies of aesthetic nostalgia lie much in luring the receiver into a nostalgic mood that in a secondary effort will trigger internal nostalgic memories, since internal, more private experiences, have a stronger emotional content. In this sense, we are also, in a way, dependent on the status of the subject in order to formulate a nostalgic aesthetic. When it comes to whether the internal or external aspect of *art* is concerned, we will focus on the internal aspects, the *text* itself, and avoid the interference of external aspects such as epiphenomena. Nevertheless, this concentration on the text does not halt our

speculations about how the text addresses external aspects such as the use of allusions, symbols, or in a wider perspective, intertextuality.

Now that we know that we are focusing on *nostalgic fiction*, let us then look at how nostalgia fits into the categories about text and aesthetics that we described in chapter one and then discuss how simulation still can be a valid tool to understand nostalgic reactions.

If we return to our categories about the relationship between artist, text and audience in chapter one, we can now see that what we will focus on is mainly categories “7 – Emotions are expressed through metaphors and symbols,” “8 – Emotions are expressed through narrative discourse,” and “9 – Emotions are expressed through style and form.” These are the categories that are situated under the headline “Text (Aesthetics)” and thus constitute the formalistic approaches to text that, as we have seen above, are the most interesting for our study. It seems that nostalgia is in a lesser (or perhaps none at all) degree evoked through our relation to fictive characters which dismisses category “6 – Emotions are expressed through our response to fictive characters.” The other two categories in that subgroup should not be completely disregarded at this point. Category “4 – Emotions are clearly expressed in the text either by use of manifested conventions or common clichés” will be part of how we look at the romantic nostalgic conventions and how they spill over into modern texts in chapter five. Category “5 – Emotions are expressed through simulation (identification)” might at first glance seem far away from how we experience nostalgia, but we will see that when we work with textual memories, for example, the idea of a narration that encourages simulation is important in order to create a loss of textual pasts.

### Testing the Methodology

To further establish the difference between art about nostalgia and nostalgic art, let us spend some time doing a comparative analysis of *American Graffiti* and *The Last Picture Show* in order to expose our methodology for its limitations or problems.

Both films look back on their respective director's childhood era from a 1970s perspective and in this sense provide an established "looking back" feeling. Furthermore, both films are generally considered nostalgic, but in different ways. "One of the most influential of all teen films, *American Graffiti* is a funny, nostalgic, and bittersweet look at a group of recent high school grads' last days of innocence" is the consensus on the *Rotten Tomatoes* website with viewer comments such as "Trend setter, nostalgic, feel good hit," and "the ultimate nostalgia movie of all time." A quick look at the reviews of *The Last Picture Show* at *Rotten Tomatoes* yields no comments about nostalgia, but instead uses words in the same general category: "timeless film," and "evocative and bittersweet slice-of-life 'picture.'"

We have two films that contently work towards questions of the past. They are films *about* nostalgia. But are they *nostalgic* films? I will argue that *American Graffiti* is more so and *The Last Picture Show* is less. As we have seen above, there are plenty of possibilities in creating nostalgia, and these possibilities are all very subjective and internal. In terms of a nostalgic aesthetics, we approach an external nostalgia that is not linked immediately to one's own memories, although they can use our own memories in a second motivational phase.

Both narratives are about adolescence in the US in the rather trouble-free and innocent period after the Second World War but before the dawn of the Vietnam War. In their coming-of-age themes, they both describe a time

where experiences are crucial in forming the lives of the characters. *American Graffiti* focuses on one iconic summer night in 1962, the night before some of the main characters are supposed to leave their home town, Modesto, California, for college. It is a time of breaking up, a definite marker between youth and adult life. Changes are in the air as envisioned by the characters. Wolfman Jack's encouragement of "Live life" is contrasted sharply with Curt's mantra, "It doesn't make sense to leave home to look for home, to give up a life to find a new life." Even John Milner who desires to live in the past and refuses change, cannot deny those very changes when he comments that the broads are not what they used to be and that he despises "that surfing shit" because "Rock'n'Roll has gone downwards ever since Buddy Holly died." In a central scene he is walking through a junkyard with a young girl, reflecting on a past symbolized by the wrecked cars. His nostalgia is bitterly ironic, since we will know through an added end title that he dies himself in a car accident some years later. In the end he wins the car race and is still the king, but he realizes the horrible reality of time when he confesses to Terry that he was, in fact, losing. Even though the film is not explicitly discussing nostalgia, it has a certain nostalgic content.

*The Last Picture Show*, on the other hand, takes place over a longer period of time. Its central theme is the change that blows over a small Texas town during the Korean War in 1951. This change is symbolized by the little movie theatre that, after providing the teenagers a place of social exchange, eventually has to close down because it has been defeated by the new TV medium. The structure of *The Last Picture Show*, in contrast to *American Graffiti*, is a circular structure, leading us through a year that commences with school start in the autumn, represented by the football season, and ending in the same windy autumn one year later. This structure is enforced



through the dialogue, constantly mentioning either the football season or the cold wind that blows through the town each autumn. More so, the film's imagery effectively captures this; the tumble weeds that blow through the sandy and desolate streets, the exteriors of the shabby cinema, and for further emphasis, the camera movement in the absolute last shot that parallels that of the first: a slow, meticulous pan over a crushed window and the street, ending on the cinema, with the difference that the pan is reversed. The reversing of the last shot seems to tell us that, yes, life is repetitious, but in these repetitions there are also changes. When we are reminded of the passing of time, often through the repetitious nature of holidays or seasons, we are generally set in a nostalgic mood, and thus the circular structure seems effective in evoking nostalgia. It creates a feeling that times passes by us too quickly, and the constant use of cars in movement creates a feeling of change and restlessness. This is something that is experienced by the older generation in the film who are feeding off their past memories from their younger years. An example is Sam's remembrance of his love experiences with Jacy's mother. Sam and all the other adults seem to live in the past, whereas these questions are not yet fermented in the youth. There is a sense of determinism in how these young people will inevitably be like the older generation, created mainly through the use of doublings; Jacy goes to the same lake as her mother had done before, and the notion of becoming her mother is brilliantly conveyed in a mirror scene between mother and daughter, where they both are framed in such a way that they seem almost to melt into one character. It is also mediated through the two returns of Duane; his first return is essentially different to the second one. In the first return, he comes home with a new car and clothes and a rebellious nature whereas in the last one he has conformed into adulthood and is dressed in military

uniform ready to embark to Korea. The sense of mortality within this circular structure is further envisioned by the weathered and experienced face of Sam the Lion; his death emphasizes the mortality of life, since he is a strong heroic character, "A Lion." He dies unnoticed, without the audience ever seeing it. Instead it is recounted in a simple dialogue scene, without sentiment.

The most crucial difference between the movies is in the way *American Graffiti* creates a definite now and then in the text through its chronological narrative when it posts the fates of the characters in the end of the film just before the end credits. Posts of success and death intervene over the pictures of the youngsters and establish the narrative as subsequent. It forces us to look back on the narrative with a certain regret and melancholia; the past seems very much *passed*. In a sense we feel an emotional loss of the characters, too, since we are distanced from their experience in knowing their fates. This means that there is a textual nostalgia at work as well as a loss of fictive characters. When *The Last Picture Show* is over we leave the cinema together with the characters, and we can only speculate about their fates. We might miss them, if they had made a certain impression on us, but we are not forced to consider their lives in a broader, longer perspective. This means that it is not the actual time of the narrative that is crucial in the nostalgic aesthetics, but *when* it is narrated. It is obviously not enough that the film was made later, but we need a confirmation of a narrative structure that is divided into a now and then. Nevertheless, the time of narrative is important in another way. It can either signal a collective past through its use of clichés and conventions, that forces us into a nostalgic mood, or work on creating a "selected memory" due to its heightened awareness of the iconographic status of the images.

*The Last Picture Show* gives us a rough and grim, almost realistic, depiction of the times around the Korean War in the small town in Texas. It is quite far away from the public image of those days. The details of interiors, clothes, and cars are not made to shadow the narrative; there is no particular focus on these things, they just seem to exist naturally, and the viewer might not be aware of them at all. They are in black and white, and as such might remind us that it is a past narrative. This, however, is not enough to make it nostalgic. Approaching a past time, using a convention like black and white in visual arts, or simply telling a past narrative (a historical novel/film) is not by any means necessarily nostalgic. As we have seen in the section of the nostalgic experience, we also need the reflection of the past, or at least something that stimulates the subject to experience past and reflection simultaneously. If the black and white images would be postulated against colour to show different narrative times, it might have worked more favourably in a nostalgic way. The use of only black and white is more, as we will see below, a celebration of a past cinema art.

The realistic and grim imagery, though, in *The Last Picture Show* has a definite political touch. We are confronted by the luxurious interiors of the country club people and the shabby arena of the workers on the oil rig, and this contrast raises ideas about class and the American dream, that somehow stands between our nostalgic experience. The world is not idealized; people are mean and egotistical, and the exteriors and interiors rough and dusty.

*American Graffiti*, on the other hand, is in lively colour, catching all the signs of neon in full Technicolor. It does not avoid the icons of its time; it is crowded with cars, hamburgers, diners, radios, dances, and everything associated with the early 1960s. It uses stereotypes and clichés, and all events happen on one beautiful summer night only. They work to create a nostalgic

atmosphere, and an idealized space that we will miss in the last moments of the film. The pastness of the past is in the centre and in many ways more important than the actual action of the characters. It is not a recreation of the early 1960s, but a re-visualization or a re-symbolization that creates a strong presence for the viewer. This nostalgic strength of a re-visualization conforms to Stewart's idea about how nostalgic souvenirs necessarily have to be incomplete and not exact replicas (Stewart 136)

The idealized aspects in *American Graffiti* are carried further into the well-behaved middle class town, where people generally are nice, and where even the youth gang, *The Pharaohs*, seem as dangerous as a Disney film. The violence that exists, a fight scene late in the night, is also very soft. There is no hard core violence, no graphic sexuality, the characters are all middle class (perhaps with the exception of Terry), and generally the great dangers of the world are neatly stuck under the pink pillows. Contrary to *The Last Picture Show*, there are no political impacts; it is a dream world, and as such something that illustrates how nostalgic memory tends to work, selecting the good parts. Furthermore, this idealization further avoids the contrast between generations that is implicit in *The Last Picture Show*. The young people seem almost parentless, and with the exception of some wise words of Wolfman Jack, the few adults that are present are either satirized or portrayed like goofs.<sup>36</sup> The characters all represent different stereotypes, and it is easy to find someone there to identify with, and this increases the possibility of sharing the nostalgic experience with the characters.

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<sup>36</sup> This is also mediated through the poster of the film, which is a caricature of the characters in the film, tightly together in a hotchpotch of their respective happenings. This is a strong contrast to the realistic black and white photos we see on the poster for *The Last Picture Show*.

The feeling of movement and change in *American Graffiti* is evidenced by cars, the sounds of trains, and airplanes, and is more physical than in *The Last Picture Show*. The eventful narrative, almost epic in its variety of scenes, seems to represent the whole variety of adolescent life which is confirmed by Terry when he exclaims the next morning, "What a night!" It corresponds strongly with the ways we tend to see our past, in terms of not a single event, but a kaleidoscope of experiences all blending together. That is why the formula of one night is very successful in creating nostalgia; it is replicating how our own nostalgic memory works. The detailed scenography forces us to feel the film as a past, whereas *The Last Picture Show*, although it is set in a past era, does not. *American Graffiti* is a celebration of youth, the times around it, and that feeling of possibilities and change. The music commemorates "the glad season of life" through "Sweet Sixteen," and is a heavy contrast to *The Last Picture Show's* blue country lyrics sung by Hank Williams. "The music [in *American Graffiti*] was as innocent as the time. Songs like 'Sixteen Candles' and 'Gonna Find Her' and 'The Book of Love' sound touchingly naive today," writes Roger Ebert in his review of the film. The deterministic qualities in the doublings and repetitions in *The Last Picture Show*, do not allow us to identify with the possibilities among the young characters, but this creates oddly another sense of nostalgia.

If we are familiar with film history, *The Last Picture Show* reminds us of the American film style of the 1940s, particularly that of John Ford. Bogdanovich copies Ford's extensive alternations between long takes and close ups with a straight cutting style. It is possible that this pastiche can aid us towards a nostalgic memory of our own, especially if we are very familiar with film history. The film ends with the last picture show at the little movie theatre; there is a celebration of the art and history of American film when

John Wayne and his fellow cowboys raise their hats and shout. The celebration of cinema, in this way, is not only an honour to the great films of early Hollywood, and cinema *per se*, but also to that past era. Its pastness is established by the symbolic last picture show, but also in the way the TV has become the central piece of furniture in every home where families now gather.

*American Graffiti* ends quite differently on a different emotional note; for the first time the camera moves down through the branches of trees and focuses on Curt's little blue car. The night has turned into morning, and all is empty and quiet. The feeling of a dream that is slipping away is aesthetically foreshadowed by the desolation in the end of the film. It is as if the dream has suddenly vanished. After the farewells (in a larger sense, farewells to an era), Curt is on his way gazing thoughtfully out the window of the plane, spotting the mysterious white car. The scene echoes Baudelaire's "A Une Passante" in its hypothetical nostalgic mood since it is a nostalgia for what might have happened. As his face shows, he is already remembering recent events. The ultimate break is then performed by "that surfin'shit," when the Beach Boys, representatives of the new 1960s, accompany the end credits with their "All Summer Long." It is the end of something concrete: a morning vanishes, people disappear, and loneliness and melancholia take over. More generally, it is the end of an epoch in every viewer's life. Through the lightheartedness of the final song, the whole feeling of the past seems, like the whole film, an idealized past – a *moment bienheureux*.

Both *American Graffiti* and *The Last Picture Show* contain different possibilities of nostalgic experiences. When *American Graffiti* focuses on creating a distinct now and then through narrative structure and the use of an idealized time/world we miss and long for, *The Last Picture Show*

encourages nostalgic moods more intellectually through its entropic vision of life and its sense of meaningless and mortality. The nostalgia in *American Graffiti* is, through its idealistic nature, less occupied with the mortality of life, although this is, of course, also provided through the deaths of two characters in the end title. *The Last Picture Show* plays much more with the hopelessness of life and its inevitable spiral towards extinction. The past in *American Graffiti* has, to use the words of Vera Dika in *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film: The Uses of Nostalgia*, “a lived resonance” in the sense that its idealization is not so much from images from the 1950s as the collective memory of these images (Dika 91). The conflict between idealized time and historical time raises a conflict in the audience that recreates the nostalgic reaction in its contrasts between joyful memory and a regretful present. “And it is precisely this conflict between memory and history,” writes Dika, “that encourages a new set of meanings to arise” and relates to the “juxtaposition of the coded material against the historical context of the film itself [...]” (91). We are not only made aware of the “coded material” through the fates of our characters in the end titles, but also through our own “knowledge of the impending destruction of this innocent world [...]” (92). When I choose to call *American Graffiti* more nostalgic than *The Last Picture Show*, I refer to the way *American Graffiti* opens up more possibilities for nostalgic experiences through its open and physical experience as well as this juxtaposition of history and memory. This contrasts to the more intellectual nostalgia (film history) of *The Last Picture Show*. We could speak of an *open* nostalgic experience and a *closed* one, definitions of how specialized or categorized the nostalgia is. *American Graffiti* contains a more open nostalgia and *The Last Picture Show* a more closed nostalgia.

### What Is Not Nostalgic?

Does all art have the capacity to evoke nostalgia in the audience? The easy answer has to be yes, but who knows and controls an emotional experience in another? Since we are talking about *possibilities* rather than truths or facts, I would say no. There are a certain elements that work against nostalgic experiences – that minimize the *possibilities*. Let us look at a few of these.

We have already mentioned the subtle but crucial difference between memory and nostalgia. Although we must distinguish clearly between remembrance and nostalgia, undoubtedly the two are related and pure remembrance, without the quality of loss that defines nostalgia, has the capacity to create possible nostalgic reactions. Nostalgia from pure remembrance is retrieved through how the audience invest the sense of loss themselves in the memories. Thus, memories, or past narration, can work nostalgically without intention. But it is important to note that not all past narration automatically evokes nostalgia in audiences. The so called historical novels are a prime example of this. Carl Rollyson writes in *Uses of the Past in the Novels of William Faulkner*: “After Scott, much of Victorian historical fiction concentrated on the past as pageant and spectacle. Historical novels were escapist exercises in nostalgia and antiquarianism, and forays into the quaintness of the past, into its manners and mores” (14). The nostalgia Rollyson refers to is not that of the reader’s experience but of the writer’s antiquarianism. Of course, if the reader has a specific interest in the times that the historical novel engages us in, there is a possibility that this will open up to an external nostalgia in the reader. In most cases, though, this is not so, and we benefit from disregarding historical novels and past narration from our research, especially when they are narrated in a style that totally encompasses the times they take place in. If the narrative style aims



for a total simulation of past times, the feeling of loss and dichotomy of now and then will be entirely a matter for the interpretation and persona of the reader.

More significant are narrative modes that work more intrusively against nostalgia, especially irony and parody, and novels that are much centred on philosophical or intellectual discourse as well as explicitly sexual content. I think it has to do with the basic romantic quality of nostalgia: its seriousness and immensely private character. Nostalgia is much like a dream and the bubble of the dream explodes when sharp things like irony, sarcasm, or graphic eroticism enter it. The same could be said of texts that are too self-reflective or experimental. This has to be viewed in terms of experiences as a whole, and does not necessarily dismiss shorter, episodic moments of nostalgia.

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is a good example of a novel that ends in a very nostalgic tone through Molly's soliloquy about past and lost times, but as a whole fails to evoke a full nostalgic experience because of its recurring stylistic games. Likewise, Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*, which is a novel about time in Ricoeur's sense and has many episodes that have nostalgic qualities, fails to become a nostalgic experience basically because of its long and complicated philosophical and historical argumentations or its preoccupation with detail. Illustrating this narrative ironic tone is a scene in which Hans Castorp is lost in a snow storm. It starts with a romantic and poetic description of the weather condition:

The position of the sun was hard to recognize, veiled as it was in haze. Behind him, at the mouth of the valley, above that part of the mountains that was shut off from view, the clouds and mist seemed to thicken

and move forward. They looked like snow – more snow – as though they were pressing demand for it! Like a good hard storm. Indeed, the little soundless flakes were coming down more quickly as he stood. (Mann 479)

As we will see later, identification with seasonal symbols, such as snow, work as memorative signs. Whatever identification the audience might experience in the above sequence, through his own associations with snow or that particular weather, is demolished a few lines later when the narrator explains in great detail the nature of the snow:

For this powder was not made of tiny grains of stone; but of myriads of tiniest drops of water, which in freezing had darted together in symmetrical variation – parts, then, of the same anorganic substance which was the source of protoplasm, of plant life, of the human body. And among these myriads of enchanting little stars, in their hidden splendour that was too small for man's naked eye to see, there was not one like unto another; an endless inventiveness governed the development and unthinkable differentiation of one and the same basic scheme, the equilateral, equiangular hexagon. Yet each, in itself – this was the uncanny, the anti-organic, the life-denying character of them all – each of them was absolutely symmetrical, icily regular in form. (Mann 479)

We do not question the brilliance of Mann's prose or his thematic urges, and the sequence of words is both exclusive and elusive. However, in both its scientific approach to snow and its philosophical consequences in its allusions to human beings and life in general, it de-romanticizes the snowfall in the beginning. Whatever ideas of nostalgia that *might* have occurred in the reader during this snowfall, have vanished into other imaginary territories.

A similar fate happens to Richard Aldington's *Death of a Hero* (1929). The "memorial to a generation" (back cover text) starts out very nostalgically: "But the twentieth century had lost its Spring with a vengeance. So a good deal of forgetting had to be done" (11). What stands between *Death of a Hero* and nostalgia is the ironic narration which seems to ridicule the past rather than glorify it. This ironic tone is apparent from the very start:

Mrs. Winterbourne liked drama in private life. She uttered a most creditable shriek, clasped both hands to her rather saggy bosom, and pretended to faint. The lover, one of those nice, clean, sporting Englishmen with a minimum of intelligence and an infinite capacity for being gulled by females, especially the clean English sort, clutched her unwillingly and automatically but with quite an Ethel M. Dell appearance of emotion, and exclaimed:

"Darling, what is it? Has *he* insulted you again?" (13-14)

A reason why irony, and its relatives parody and satire, obstruct nostalgic sentiments can be found in the famous distinction between naïve and sentimental poetry by Friedrich Schiller in his essay *Über naïve und sentimentalische Dichtung* [*Naïve and Sentimental Poetry and On the Sublime*] (1795). Schiller distinguishes between two main types of literary expressions: satire and elegy. A poet is satirical when the divergence between ideal and reality is expressed through humorous or penalizing texts. But if the poet focuses on the ideal before reality in a serious tone, then he is elegiac. The elegy becomes, in Schiller's taxonomy, a shape of the sadness of lost nature or ideals. Schiller's definitions are expressive for much of the romantic dualism we find in Kant and Hegel and can articulate the romantic concern for the

division of two apparent attitudes towards the serious literary material: nature, culture, past, and ideals. Nostalgic literature does not need to be humourless, but the narration's attitude towards the past has to be sincere and elegiac in order to emphasize the specific relationships between a disorderly present and an idealized past.

Like irony, overt eroticism might work against the romantic style of nostalgia. Robert Hemmings writes in "A Taste of Nostalgia: Children's Books from the Golden Age" that "nostalgia conceals aspects of childhood the adult writer and reader choose to disregard—sexuality, solipsism, and hedonist desire [...]" (59). Certainly, one of the main drivers in the idealization of childhood is to preserve the innocence and the natural stage of that longing. The intervention of typical adult desires diminishes the quality of the innocent past and thus works counter-nostalgically. It is important to justify that the mood of sensuality is crucial to nostalgia but when sensuality transforms into explicit eroticism, or even pornography, the sensibility of childhood is lost. This is shown in Eric L. Tribunella's "From Kiddie Lit to Kiddie Porn: The Sexualization of Children's Literature" where modern adult retellings of famous children stories release the childhood memories of nostalgic values.

Now, this sense of innocence travels way beyond the concept of childhood representation. It seems to be a necessary nostalgic mood in more adult nostalgic literature as well. Have we not heard complaints about how asexual the characters are in Tolkien's literature, and is not this very fact one of the strong devices behind the nostalgic appeal of his tales? And F. Scott Fitzgerald has been described as a prude, since the furthest erotic stage in his stories is indeed the kiss.

There is a reason to believe that, in most cases, eroticism and pornography work counter-nostalgically in any kind of literary work since it disturbs the essential qualities of nostalgia – that of the notion of nature, innocence, simplicity, childhood, and the purity of sensations that stem from these essentials.

### **Nostalgia and Literature**

Much has been spoken of fiction in general, and many examples from films have been used. This is due to the fact that it is easier to discuss films since they might be more vividly remembered and easier shared than literature. In addition, films lack that aspect of interpretation that involves our realization of images from words (we construct the spatiality of prose into our own images of interiors and exteriors, people, and things), which means that the range of individual experience is somewhat smaller. This thesis is not about art and nostalgia but about nostalgic experiences in modern literature, and even though film and literature have much in common, they also, as noted, differ on several important aspects.

This above noted difference in the experience of literature from film, that the reader has to invest more of himself in order to visualize the prose, has consequences for our project. It means that prose lacks many of those clearly nostalgic devices such as sound and images provide. The strong nostalgia that characterizes music for example, and is used in films, is missing in literature. We can refer to music of course, but music will not be heard. And the sounds of summer, although suggested in literature, will still not be heard. Likewise, the special brand of jeans that was favoured in the 1970s, and part of the filmic image in films from that time, will only be “jeans” in a novel written at the same time. Of course, the modern novel has

ways to bring in contemporary culture through various techniques such as providing images in the books (Aragorn and the surrealists), using a montage technique that includes aspects of the popular (Döblin's *Berlin, Alexanderplatz*) or referring to which songs are being heard (*The Great Gatsby*). Nevertheless, images and sounds are missing. The way prose approaches the audience's sense of musicology and audibility will be touched upon in chapter four as part of the stylistics of prose. Furthermore, as noted above, there seems to be a greater variety in how we experience literature than film, since we have to imagine the physicality of the fictive universe through a few guidelines, which means that one person's room is perhaps not exactly another person's room. The danger lies in that every reading experience tends to be more private than a film viewing and thus more difficult to analyze in terms of a shared emotional response. The analytical problems that arise here have been justified enough in chapter one.

Nostalgia in literature can operate on a number of varieties of the two essential aspects of nostalgia (now and then, and universal grief), and it is important to keep them in mind when we now move on and distinguish the different ways literature can evoke nostalgic experiences in the reader. This taxonomy will be divided loosely into three chapters according to the division of micro and macro that we provided in the end of chapter one. In the chapter "Nostalgic Stylistics and Narratology," we will concentrate on the smaller units of the texts, episodic micro-nostalgias: the ways tenses and grammatical temporalities can affect our experience, and what are the narratological implications on nostalgia in narrative voice, mood, duration, frequency, and anachronies. In chapter five, "Nostalgic Tropes," we will focus on how certain images and ideas of nostalgia can be reproduced in different forms through style, imagery, and representation. Chapter six will

then solely look at macro units, such as whole narratives and some nostalgic strategies which include the analeptic structure and the use of textual memory that affect the experience of the whole text. The structure of this taxonomy is logical, since the larger perspective is dependent on the smaller details. Finally, chapter seven will provide a full analysis of the nostalgic experience of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* in order to test the nostalgic tools and methodology as developed.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Nostalgic Stylistics and Narratology**

This chapter sets out to explore some of the stylistic and narratological aspects concerning nostalgia. Although it is aiming for the micro-perspective, certain narratological perspectives, especially that of mood and voice, require a wider context and will unavoidably relate also to macro-perspectives. The first part deals exclusively with the smallest parts of stylistics such as tenses, specific grammar, and syntax. The narratological section will then investigate how narration and narrator possibly creates nostalgic experiences. Finally we will look into the concept of hypothetical time.

#### **Nostalgic Stylistics**

##### **Nostalgic Tenses**

“Nostalgia is like a grammar lesson: you find the present tense, but the past perfect!” (Owens Lee Pomeroy).

Since nostalgia, in most cases, is a retrospective movement, it might be appropriate to think of the past tense as the standard nostalgic mode. And true enough, the signalling of a text as a past event through the past tense does carry the possibilities of nostalgic tone, especially if the time of the narrating is a clear contrast to the time of the past narration. However, as Paul Ricœur notices, “it is not the past as such that is expressed by the past tense but rather the attitude of relaxation, of uninvolvement” (Ricœur 69).



The use of a present tense in a past narration can, at times, create an odd sense of nostalgia since, just as Ricœur proposes, it activates the moment, isolates it, idealizes it, and slows it down, as we can see in Peter Walsh's introspection in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925):

As a cloud crosses the sun, silence falls on London;  
and falls on the mind. Effort ceases. Time flaps on the  
mast. There we stop; there we stand. Rigid, the skeleton  
of habit alone upholds the human frame. Where there is  
nothing, Peter Walsh said to himself; feeling hollowed  
out, utterly empty within. Clarissa refused me, he  
thought. He stood there thinking, Clarissa refused me.  
(42)

It is, of course, not only the present tense at work here, but also the shortening of sentences that slows down the rhythm considerably, compared to the main part of the narrative. It is only the first part that is in the present tense; the narrative recovers its past tense after "Peter Walsh said to himself." The change between present and past tense can modify the mood of the narration; in this case the present tense as part of Peter Walsh's thoughts exactly captures his emotional occupation.

The use of both past and present tense can naturally be part of nostalgic narration depending on other aspects involved, but perhaps nostalgia benefits from a more "active" tense such as the past progressive.

### **Past Progressives**

The active aspect of past progressives lies in how "[t]hey do not express any 'neutral' facts about a situation, but reflect the character's (and narrator's) intense involvement and subjective perspective on the situation" (Toolan 96-

97). However, their active force also stems from how they create a feeling of something unfinished, ongoing, or recurring.

A typical past progressive sentence is as follows: “He was talking when the car drove by.” The past is conveyed by “was” while “talking” is the progressive form of “talk,” thus making the present tense of “talk” into something that is progressing. Often, there is also a signal word, that defines time such as “while.” The use of past progressives does signal a temporality somewhere in between past and ongoing present; it does not completely belong to a past event, but it is not entirely a present activity either. Frances O. Austin actually claims that the ambiguity of past or present time naturally leads to something “out of time” (“*Ing* forms in *Four Quartets* 24). In his study of the past progressives (and present participles) in T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* he concludes in a reply to Peter Barry that Eliot uses them as representation of “Eternity – which he sets against the time of clock and calendars” (“Making Sense of Syntax: A Reply to Peter Barry” 167). This sense of “out of time” makes past progressives very appropriate for conveying a nostalgic tone, since they have this unique mix of temporalities in the tense itself

The use of past progressives also makes scenes more visual, actualizing a feeling that it *is* happening before us. This is confirmed by Michael J. Toolan, in *Stylistics of Fiction*, as he observes that “progressives are not swiftly passed over in the process of reading the text. The co-occurring adjuncts help to retain the reader’s attention, elaborating upon those predicates and their implications, and diverting the reader yet further from the linear sequence of events ordinarily signaled by a succession of non-expanded predicates in simple past tense” (113). What Toolan means by retaining the reader’s attention is what Michael Hogan suggests as being an “immediacy,” an “immersion in the flux of the moment, and suspension

within a single moment of time” that creates a dreamlike quality (qtd. in Toolan 102). In the wading scene in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914-15) we see the forceful use of the past progressives:

His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic,  
dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy  
shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer or a flower?  
Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a  
breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless  
succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and  
unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and  
wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens  
with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than the other.  
(186-87)

If we consider exchanging the past progressives with past tense we realize the slight difference in mood. “His soul swooned into some new world,” feels like something completed whereas “His soul was swooning” does retain the feeling of something ongoing, something accentuated, important, unique, and almost “dreamlike.” The sensation of dual times through progressives is conveyed by Toolan as an activity that “was or still is in progress at the time specified by accompanying indicators (tense inflections, time adverbials)” (99).

In the excerpt above we also find several participles that, although not conveying the same sense of dual times as the past progressives, still retain a sense of being in between something as a result of their transformation from verbs to adjectives. The repetitive quality of “glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding” also creates a notion of something “out of time,” ongoing and enhancing. Likewise, these participles possess a certain sound quality that is mesmerizing in their sharing of the -ing ending. Austin notices

that participles accidentally share “the same ending as words that are associated with continuous and vibrating sounds, words such as *ring*; *sing*” (“*Ing* forms in *Four Quartets*” 23).

### **Proximate and Non-Proximate Words**

Toolan describes another stylistic idiosyncrasy where words, mostly deictic pronouns, in their proximate and non-proximate form can unfold the duality of time and space. He illustrates this with the following table:

Proximate	Non-Proximate
I	You
this	that
here	there
now	then (Toolan 128)

In applying these sets of antagonistic pairs in different ways we can achieve a sense of nostalgic temporality and space between two values. A simple sentence such as “Things were better then than now” (Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* 156) carries enormous nostalgic potentials through the use of two charged deictic pronouns. The use of “I” and “You” can freely be extended to incorporate “I” and “She” or “Today” and “Tomorrow,” or why not “Hither” and “Thither” as in the waves in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* which move “hither and thither, hither and thither [...]” (Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* 185).

### Asyndeton and Polysyndeton

As we will see in chapter five, nostalgic imagery is often constituted by long and winding sentences. The way clauses are coordinated in a sentence can be divided into *asyndeton* and *polysyndeton*. This is interesting from a nostalgic perspective since the trend to use polysyndeton exists in the works of Proust, Woolf, Joyce, Lowry, and especially Fitzgerald. Asyndeton connects clauses through the use of comma, while polysyndeton mainly uses the word “and.” Let us look at an example that uses predominantly polysyndeton:

By seven o’clock the orchestra has arrived—no thin five piece affair but a whole pit full of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers have come in from the beach now and are dressing upstairs; the cars from New York are parked five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas are gaudy with primary colors and hair shorn in strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar is in full swing and floating rounds of cocktails permeate the garden outside until the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other’s names. (Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* 44)

F. H. Langman writes about *The Great Gatsby* that “the element of wonder, delight, nostalgia, comes from the unashamed romanticism of the phrasing [...]” (35), but what is it exactly that is nostalgic about the phrasing? If we study the excerpt above, we find only three periods, which means there is a flow, a rhythm defined by how the length of the sentences and how the clauses are coordinated. Commas and, in particular, “and” function as pausing elements instead of periods. The repeating rhythm is most

prominent in the enumeration of instruments in the beginning of the passage or the phrase “the air is alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and instructions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other’s names,” where several “and[s]” create a feeling of being breathless. This can be compared to that ecstasy, or over-ambition, so often found in children when they experience something important and immediately want to tell somebody about it. Hence, the specific phrasing in this case seems to emphasize action and eventfulness in an almost impressionistic manner, so that the atmosphere of the actual scene is syntactically transferred into the reader’s experience. This is further enhanced by the switch into present tense (as discussed earlier) in the middle of the description which minimizes the distance between the reader and the narrated impressions.

Surely asyndeton increases the sense of speed and energy by disregarding normal punctuation, and this can be valuable if one attempts to convey motion, tumult, and vigour as part of an exceptional memory. This also helps to involve the reader in the scene. However, I argue that it actually is the use of polysyndeton that carries the most nostalgic value. “And” in normal context signals both the oral and the ordinary, such as a single occurrence in an opening phrase like “And then we went there.” The repetitive “and” has another connotation: that of pathos and expansive emotions. In *Genesis 1:2* we find it contributing to the high-toned style: “And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen 1.2). Polysyndeton has the capacity, as in the example from *The Great Gatsby*, to infuse awe, pathos, and poignancy to a text. Its general seriousness combines well with lyricism or symbolism in order to fulfil the gravity of the nostalgic

emotion, in opposition to more ironic or satirical moods as discussed in chapter three.

There is also another factor that makes polysyndeton suitable for nostalgic emotions; the purely rhythmic contributions it makes to a sentence. The following sentence from Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* clearly illustrates how the polysyndeton, with its repetitive character and how it graphically stands somewhat aside from other words and thus is easily recognizable, sets a rhythmic pattern that alludes to time, clocks, and progress:

The nights now are full of wind and destruction; the  
trees plunge and bend and their leaves fly helter skelter  
until the lawn is plastered with them and they lie  
packed in gutters and choke rain pipes and scatter  
damp paths. (146)

It is not a sentence that is in any obvious way about anything nostalgic, except that the poetic description of autumn might connote memories of readers' autumns. Still, there is something nostalgic about it, and it has to do with the phrasing. The clash between clock time from the polysyndeton and the presence of the poetic description activates our imagination for something outside time, or more specifically, something that resists time. At the same time, the rhythm reinforces the notion of time passing (appropriately the name of the section in the novel is "Time Passes") illustrated by the accentuated motion in the sentence from active verbs such as "plunge," "bend," and "fly" as well as addressing autumn as a symbol for change.

In short, asyndeton and polysyndeton have the ability to emphasize or create movement, energy, impressions, pathos, and rhythms that can either enhance a scene already containing other nostalgic connotations, or they can

create a nostalgic mood by themselves. This is especially true of the polysyndeton that can create both awe and emotional emphasis as well as provide repetitions and rhythmic patterns.

## **Narratological Perspectives on Nostalgia**

### **Anachronies**

The discrepancy between story and narrative, what Genette calls *anachronies*, is a well known fact. According to Genette, a study of anachronies is a study of the “connections between the temporal *order* of succession of the events in the story and the pseudo-temporal order of their arrangement in the narrative” (35). In order to make narrative sense, reading is dependent on remembering what came before the present sentence (the past events of the reading) and assessing this memory in the present reading. Wolfgang Iser writes that “what has been read shrinks in the memory to a foreshortened background, but it is being constantly evoked in a new context [...]” (*The Act of Reading* 111). If this was not true, reading a book would be a process of reading thousands of separate sentences, in their own right understandable, but in a narrative perspective incomprehensible. The chronological reading order, or “consumption” of a text, is a fact: “one can run a film backwards,” Genette writes, “but one cannot read a text backwards, letter by letter, or even word by word, or even sentence by sentence, without its ceasing to be a text” (34). Reading is linear. A *narrative* is linear in terms of “consuming” it. It is the expectations aroused by what we have read, our alertness for the future narrative, which is the driving force behind our reading. That does not mean, however, that what is narrated, the order of *story* events, necessarily



has to be presented in chronology; on the contrary, the case is more often not.

When narrative and story differ in time, we achieve anachrony. This leads to a possible *analepsis* (retrospection) of going back into story time. On a narrative scheme it would be illustrated as follows: BCAD, where the emphasized A represents a retrospective move back to the beginning of the story. Similarly, it is possible to have a *prolepsis* (anticipation) into the future of the story which would be illustrated as follows: ABDC, where the emphasized D indicates the prolepsis.<sup>37</sup>

At this stage we will not bother with the complexities that anachronies provide within a whole narrative structure on a macro level (chapter six) but rather look at these anachronies as isolated phenomena in order to study the art of addressing story past and story future and to investigate the nature of these jumps in time. Hence, it is the actual transitions between times that are at the core.

### **Analepsis**

A good way to illustrate how analepsis might work nostalgically is to study some famous examples from Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*<sup>38</sup> whose multiple retrospections create nostalgic meaning through their ability to "modify the meaning of past occurrences after the event [...]" (Genette 56). To clarify, the ability to either revalue or recharge the past event with a present meaning creates a possibility of giving this event a nostalgic content. It is not automatically so, because this event could be treated just like a memory. Often in the *Recherche* it is contrasted with the present attitude

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<sup>37</sup> This is a simplification since anachronies can be either internal or external; analepsis reaching back before (BCAD or after (ACBD) the zero degree. They can also be repeating (ABAC). The same goes for prolepsis.

<sup>38</sup> I will here on refer to *A la recherche du temps perdu* as the *Recherche*.

towards the past which makes it nostalgic. *Du côté de chez Swann* begins with the time of sleeplessness, "For a long time, I went to bed early" (7), and the first pure and longer analepsis occurs on page 12:

[...] I would not try to go back to sleep right away; I would spend the greater part of the night remembering our life in the old days, in Combray at my great-aunt's house, in Balbec, in Paris, in Doncières, in Venice, elsewhere still, remembering the places, the people I had known there, what I had seen of them, what I had been told about them.

At Combray, every day beginning in the late afternoon, long before the moment when I would have to go to bed and stay there, without sleeping, far away from my mother and grandmother, my bedroom again became the fixed and painful focus of my preoccupations. (12-13)

Then we enter the analepsis of Marcel's anguish of not being kissed by his mother the night of Swann's visit which, together with some more general descriptions of those days in Combray, occupies some thirty-four pages until we, after a short return to the main narrative, once again are moved back in story time:

So it was that, for a long time, when, awakened at night, I remembered Combray again, I saw nothing of it but this sort of luminous panel, cut out from among indistinct shadows, like those panels which the glow of a Bengal light or some electric projection will cut out and illuminate in a building whose other parts remain plunged in darkness: at the rather broad base, the small parlour, the dining-room, the top of the dark path by which M. Swann, the unconscious author of my sufferings, would arrive, the front hall where I would head towards the first step of the staircase, so painful to

climb, that formed, by itself, the very narrow trunk of this irregular pyramid; and, at the top, my bedroom with the little hallway and its glass-paned door for Mama's entrance; in a word, always seen at the same hour, isolated from everything that might surround it, standing out alone against the darkness, the bare minimum of scenery (like that which one sees prescribed at the beginnings of the old plays for performances in the provinces) needed for the drama of my undressing; as though Combray had consisted only of two floors connected by a slender staircase and as though it had always been seven o'clock in the evening there. (46)

The narrator's experience of the memory as a distinct theatrical and almost unreal event highlights its capacity as a selected memory. The narrator himself relates it to "old plays." The juxtaposition of the illuminated places and objects of importance to the other forgotten parts "plunged in darkness" clearly distinguishes how the nostalgic memory operates. The rather detailed, but at the same time expressionistic, conveyance of time and space as well as mood gives it a nostalgic touch. More importantly, the commingling of past and present times through the way the analepsis superimposes itself over present narration, grants it a stronger emotional experience of past and present. The tone of the prose evidently belongs to a present narration in its theatrical and commenting aspects. Still, the past emerges expressively in the short but specific descriptions of the rooms of the drama.

### **Prolepsis**

Narrative order is not only about analepsis but also about anticipation, what is called *prolepsis*. We find two sorts of nostalgic prolepses. *Internal* prolepsis,

the most common, uses a future event as a return to the time of narrating, to remember or evaluate the present event. An example of an internal prolepsis occurs when the narrator in *Du côté de chez Swann* exclaims in regard to Swann and his own anguish at bed time that “as I learned later, a similar anguish was the torment of long years of his life [...]” (33). The other is called *external* prolepsis and occurs when the future event is not decided and addressed often in an imaginary way: “I saw myself standing in our new garden watering the plants.” Internal prolepsis has a movement from the present narrative point into a later event and then back again, whereas the external prolepsis tends to have a single movement towards the future event. In the internal prolepsis the present situation is evaluated, and in the external prolepsis the departure is from the present situation but the focus is on the anticipated event. The external prolepsis declares that the narrator does not know the whole story, or the end of it, whereas the internal prolepsis identifies that the narrator knows the whole story he is narrating.

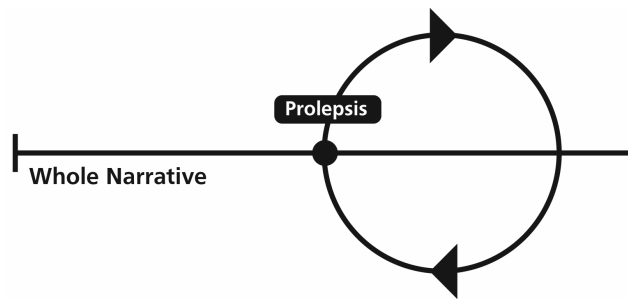


Fig. 7. Internal Prolepsis.

The internal prolepsis plays an important part in creating a reverberation of how the present time is soon to be the past time. As Genette recognizes, prolepsis is most favourably used together with first person subsequent narration (67). It is not particularly the content that interests us

but rather the fact that the narrator “learned later” that creates a temporal flux, a notion of already remembering the event that is described. The notion of remembering an event from a future perspective grants this event a particular, even strange, sense of importance and truly transient character. This makes it highly nostalgic to Genette who considers them having,

an inverse weight that is perhaps more specifically Proustian and that betokens rather a sentiment of nostalgia for what Vladimir Jankélévitch once called the “primultimateness” of the first time: that is, the fact that the first time, to the very extent to which one experiences its inaugural value intensely, is at the same time always (already) a last time [...] (72)

The atmosphere involved around an internal prolepsis consists of a spotlighting of the present event as something forever past/lost. This is exactly what happens in the end of chapter nine in Dickens’s *Great Expectations* (1860-61) when Pip the narrator remembers the particular day from a future time:

I fell asleep recalling what I “used to do” when I was at Miss Havisham’s; as though I had been there weeks or months, instead of hours, and as though it were quite an old subject of remembrance, instead of one that had arisen only that day.

That was a memorable day to me, for it made great changes in me and my fortunes. But it is the same with any life. Imagine one selected day struck out of it, and think how different its course would have been. Pause, you who read this, and think for a moment of the long chain of iron or gold, of thorns or flowers, that would

never have bound you, but for the formation of the first link on one memorable day. (Dickens 93-94)

Typical for these prolepses are, as Genette described, the use of a first person narration where the narrator has the capacity to value and charge the present with nostalgic values from his point of later narrating.

This typical kind of narration forcefully arouses nostalgia in Stephen King's "The Body" where the small insertions of proleptic truths about the passage of time become emblematic for the nostalgic tone of the whole story. The narrator leaves his recollection of childhood dinners with the family to reflect upon that memory: "It took me a long time after that summer to realize that most of the tears I cried were for my mom and dad" (299). The future story event is then perhaps not exactly the time of narrating, it occurs as if it were somewhere in between the time of narrating and the memory. In another prolepsis, the time is more specific: "It never occurred to me to question this set of priorities until about twenty years later" (307). When the boys are stunned by the view of the railroad tracks and the river the narration again becomes proleptic: "I'll never forget that moment, no matter how old I get" (332). In this case, the a-temporality of the anticipation fortifies the magnitude of the event as something exceptional and something to be nostalgic about. This way of creating hyper memories of the present events and establishing them as unique reaches its climax in the very nostalgic prolepsis when the gang is sitting under a tree: "[...] he meant those things but it seems to me now that there was more, and that we all knew it. Everything was there and around us. We knew exactly who we were and exactly where we were going. It was grand" (339). It is a celebration of the innocent and uncomplicated era of childhood, maybe what we actually miss from our past childhoods. The embrace of simplicity is, as we will see in

chapter five, a staple of nostalgic concern. To further establish both the grandeur of childhood and its fleeting quality, the narrator exclaims: “I never had any friends later on like the ones I had when I was twelve. Jesus, did you?” (341). The address directly to the reader with the “you?” is interesting since it invites us to share this revelation. Even though it is not true, perhaps we did not have very good friends when we were twelve, the intimacy between narrator and reader makes us agree with that statement.

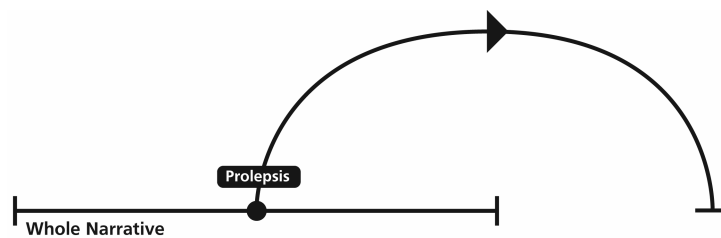


Fig. 8. External Prolepsis.

External nostalgic prolepsis, on the other hand, involves an anticipation of a future event in which one feels nostalgic for the present event. The difference from the internal prolepsis is that the temporal movement goes from the present event into the future event rather than from the future event back into the present event. If we alter the prolepsis from *Great Expectations* we could easily make it an external prolepsis: “That day would certainly become memorable to me, for it made great changes in me.” The original prolepsis is clearly internal since it involves a future story event that lies within the totality of the narrative – the narration occurs at a later stage than the story event. But the altered prolepsis is external and more prophetic perhaps, since it approaches a story event that will not be within the realm of the narrative.

A variation of this kind of prolepsis is acknowledged by Santesso as a main nostalgic style found previously in romantic nostalgic poetry (62-63). In this kind of proleptic nostalgia there is a vision of a future event that will make the present situation nostalgic. An example of future nostalgia happens when someone hears a new song and already realizes that this song will function nostalgically in the future to evoke this very moment. It can also entail a future imagination that carries nostalgic weight because of its sense of idealization. Such a nostalgic prolepsis occurs late in Lowry's *Under the Volcano* (1947) when Yvonne dreams of her future with the consul, a future imagination that suddenly is scattered by the presence of reality:

But their house was in her mind now as she walked:  
 their home was real: Yvonne saw it at sunrise, in the  
 long afternoons of south-west winds, and at nightfall  
 she saw it in starlight and moonlight, covered with  
 snow: she saw it from above, in the forest, with the  
 chimney and the roof below her, and the foreshortened  
 pier: she saw it from the beach rising above her, and she  
 saw it, tiny, in the distance, a haven and a beacon  
 against the trees, from the sea. It was only that the little  
 boat of their conversation had been moored  
 precariously; she could hear it banging against the  
 rocks; later she would drag it up further, where it was  
 safe. – Why was it though, that right in the centre of her  
 brain, there should be a figure of a woman having  
 hysterics, jerking like a puppet and banging her fists  
 upon the ground? (281)

The rare punctuations through commas and colons make this future daydream into visual segments, associations appear one after another, ending in the **harsh** reality of the impossibilities of such a dream. The constant filmic movement of Yvonne's point of view as well as the different



temporalities further enhance the grandeur, splendor, and idyllic character of the dream. The idealization seems to scatter when the image of the moored boat appears since it introduces an image that is both hard to interpret ("the little boat of their conversation"<sup>39</sup>) and that carry an intruding sound in the idyll: "banging against the rocks". This "banging" sound transfers itself into the final image of reality – that of Yvonne seeing herself as a hysterical woman "banging her fists upon the ground".

### Frequency

*Frequency* deals with the quantitative relationship between story and narrative.

The different relationships are:

1. Narrating once what happened once
  2. Narrating several times what happened several times
  3. Narrating several times what happened once
  4. Narrating once what happened several times
- (Genette 114-16)

What interest us are categories 3 and 4. Category 3 is generally what we can name repetitions. Within the text we can identify two different repetitions, one that is exactly, or at least almost, identical ("I ate breakfast yesterday. I ate breakfast yesterday."), and one where the repetitions differ but they regard the same actual event, perhaps from different point of views ("I ate breakfast yesterday. Yesterday I had an egg for breakfast."). Category 4 is called an *iterative frequency* such as "For many years I had an egg for breakfast." The discussions of the different frequencies will be short and

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<sup>39</sup> According to *The Malcolm Lowry Project* this boat can refer to the image of a love boat that transcends all the storms of life as depicted in Lowry's short story "The Bravest Boat" (279.5).

concise since examples will be provided within the analyses in chapter six and seven.

### **Repetitive Frequency**

To separate the two different kind of repetitions we will call them repetition (identical) and recollection (different) respectively. I base this definition on Kierkegaard's distinction between repetition and recollection: "Repetition and recollection are the same movement, only in opposite directions; for what is recollected has been, is repeated backwards, whereas repetition, if it is possible, is recollected forwards. Therefore repetition, if it is possible, makes a man happy – whereas recollection makes him unhappy [...]" (3-4). Repetition, due to its exactness, forces the reader back into the narrative, but it also carries, as Kierkegaard mentions, a movement forward. Recollection does not necessarily force the reader back into the narrative, but rather opens up new ways of looking at the story.

Repetitions are quite common in nostalgic narratives. Often they create the impression of being outside the story for both the reader and the narrator due to their narrative oddity. These repetitions thus become emotionally charged bursts from either the narrative itself or the consciousness of a character. However, they can also be props of the actual story, such as the poster of the film "Los Manos de Orlac" in *Under the Volcano*, or simply cues in a dialogue, such as the repeated "—Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?" in Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* (1934). Generally, repetitions seem to work in five different ways: (1) as rhythmical time markers, such as we have seen with polysyndeton or the repetition of certain specific words and phrases; (2) as a means of emphasizing clock time through addressing the actual essence of repetition in embracing

Kierkegaard's notion of the impossibility of real repetition; (3) as a tragic element, hammering in the unavoidable progress of time as well as an upcoming tragedy; (4) as a reinforcement of a specific meaning or atmosphere through the repetition of key words, as in Hemingway's prose; (5) as a means of forcing the reader back into textual time in order to either re-evaluate or remind of a past textual event (see chapter five on textual memory).

Recollections, on the other hand, trigger a past story event in the narrative and acknowledge the importance of this past scene and thus can inflict idealization or a stronger sense of loss. Since recollections are not exact and often charged with the frames of a character's or narrator's memory, they inheritably become sad and melancholic in the way that they cannot reproduce the truth or reality in an exact degree.<sup>40</sup> As we will see in chapter seven, the single event of Caddie climbing a pear tree in *The Sound and the Fury* creates multiple recollections from her brothers that adds and subtracts meaning to and from the initial event.

### **Iterative Frequency**

Genette recognizes that *iterative frequency* is a very common form of narration in the first three sections of the *Recherche* (117). Instead of the common use of past tense "happened," things "used to happen" instead. The iterative is a sort of summarizing form; it explores rituals and recurring events and therefore evokes the nostalgic idea of how rituals and seasons trigger nostalgic memories. It also regards memory as nostalgic rather than memorial, since it lacks the specificity of memory and embraces the vagueness of nostalgic memory. A phrase such as "I remember the day in

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<sup>40</sup> Again, this echoes Stewart's concept of the incomplete souvenir (see page 113).

June 1942 when dad caught that big fish” is less nostalgic than “I remember that dad and I used to fish in the summers.” Sometimes the iterative frequency is so detailed that one suspects that this is not exactly how it happened each time, but in reality there were certain variations of it. This is what Genette calls *pseudo-iterative* (121). The pseudo quality arises out of the unbelievable detailed repetitiousness of the acts. With Genette’s words: “*pseudo-iterative*—that is, scenes presented, particularly by their wording in the imperfect, as iterative, whereas their richness and precision of detail ensure that no reader can seriously believe they occur and reoccur in that manner, several times, without any variation” (121). The pseudo quality of the iterative removes it even further from that of real memory into the sphere of nostalgic idealization and how some details come to represent a memory that embraces more vaguely a certain time or era in one’s life.

### Duration

The difficulties in comparing narrative time with story time are discussed in detail by Genette (86-94). The actual act of reading a narrative cannot be gauged in terms of precise time and thus we have to resort to a hypothetical theory instead of the precision that can be achieved by the use of a zero degree in narratological order and frequency.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, with the help of Genette we can identify four basic forms of “narrative movement” (94). At one end we have what Genette refers to as a “descriptive *pause*” (94) which means that the narrative slows down usually due to a heightened number of details or detours. In the other end we find *ellipsis*, which is a clean break or shortage of story time in the narrative. In between there we have *scene* which

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<sup>41</sup> Zero degree is a hypothetically perfect and identical temporal correspondence between story and narrative (Genette 36).

occurs when narrative and story are close in execution, as in dialogue, and *summary* which speeds up the narrative to convey a longer stretch of story time (Genette 94-95). In which ways can these narratological tools be helpful in order to analyze nostalgia in texts?

First one has to mention that there is no single strategy of duration that is nostalgic, but rather different strategies that work nostalgically depending on what they aim for in a larger narratological perspective. The most common, *descriptive pause*, is used in order to enhance and idealize a moment, a memory, and encourage reader identification with the experience, a strategy we will encounter often when we discuss nostalgic imagery in chapter five. We have already mentioned one strategy; the change into present tense can slow down the narrative. In Proust we find more strategies.

Proust's bursts of nostalgic imagery are famous for their extremely detailed remembrances. In the highly detailed prose we face much of the subsequent idealization of the moment at the same time as the accurately and meticulously arranged episode echoes its virginal appearance. Here we encounter a true accomplishment of past and present, of the now of narration and the presence of the past moment:

Suddenly the air was torn apart: between the puppet theatre and the circus, on the clearing horizon, against the opening sky, I had just spied, as though it were a fabulous sign, Mademoiselle's blue feather. And already Gilberte was running as fast as possible in my direction, sparkling and red under a square fur hat, animated by the cold, the lateness and her desire to play; a little before reaching me, she let herself slide along the ice and, either to help keep her balance, or because she thought it more graceful, or pretending to move like a skater, her arms opened wide as she came forward

smiling, as if she wanted to take me into them. (*The Way by Swann's* 401)

The commingling of details and narrator's thoughts in these two long sentences creates a sensational experience of this event, while the tone of the narration still clearly defines it as a past one. The long sentence, besides giving the text a sense of awe, also slows down the reading tempo due to the more complicated syntax.

It seems then that nostalgic texts, with their dependence on details, sensations, and lyricism, often lean on a slower narrative tempo and that the use of scenes, summaries and ellipses are limited. However, the sense of awe that can be derived from a high speed narrative can also benefit nostalgia. If we see nostalgic memory as a vague rather than a specific moment, the higher speed can capture the eventfulness of a certain time or era. In fact, that is, as Genette observes, what happens quite often in Proust's descriptive sections, where the descriptions are detailed but they convey an iterative time. Genette exemplifies this point with the descriptions of the church at Combray (Proust, *The Way by Swann's* 61-65) which is a very long description of the church, but the information about the church was not gathered at one specific moment but out of many (Genette 99-100). Thus, the use of ellipsis and summary can prove valuable if the desired effect is to capture a time when there is much going on, which is not unusual in the case of nostalgic memory.

### **The Sensations of Anachronies**

Nostalgic anachronies approach our sensations, either directly or in the use of the onomatopoeic and through synaesthesia where language tries to trigger other sensations such as taste, smell, and hearing. This is

predominantly done in order to seduce the reader into the phenomenology of memory and nostalgia, which rather, as we have seen in chapter two, resides within other sensational context than merely the text. Triggering sensations of sounds and smells, in addition to the visual details, all work toward intensifying the temporal leap. There has to be something that boosts the temporal departure, and somehow fulfils the nostalgic ideal of past and present incurably inseparable. For example, an analepsis like this one in *The Great Gatsby* carries no nostalgia whatsoever: “and he could tell it no longer and Myrtle Wilson’s tragic achievement was forgotten. Now I want to go back a little and tell what happened at the garage after we left there the night before” (163-64). It is a very matter of fact transition. But the following remembrance from Jordan has a different nostalgic weight:

I turned toward Mr. Gatsby, but he was no longer there.

One October day in nineteen-seventeen—  
 (said Jordan Baker that afternoon, sitting up very straight on a straight chair in the tea-garden at the Plaza Hotel)—I was walking along from one place to another half on the sidewalks and half on the lawns. I was happier on the lawns because I had on shoes from England with rubber nobs on the soles that bit into the soft ground. I had on a new plaid skirt also that blew a little in the wind and whenever this happened the red, white and blue banners in front of all the houses stretched out stiff and said *tut-tut-tut-tut* in a disapproving way. (79)

There are several things working nostalgically with this analepsis. First, there is a long duration due to the amount of details, and this creates a visual stimulus in the remembrance. Although not directly addressing the auditory,

the nobs that “bit into the soft ground” still carry implicitly the sound of the shoes and perhaps even the earthy smell of the autumn grass. We can hear the rustling sound of the skirt blowing in the wind and, of course, the disapproving sounds from the flags in the wind. Here we also see a great example of how the involvement of the prolepsis (Jordan telling this story later) within the analepsis does create that exact feeling of grandeur over the past event that Genette acknowledged.

Likewise, the transition into past times becomes so effectual in *Mrs Dalloway* when Lady Bruton’s nostalgia is evoked by the transitional sounds of summer childhood:

She sighed, she snored, not that she was asleep, only  
drowsy and heavy, drowsy and heavy, like a field of  
clover in the sunshine this hot June day, with the bees  
going round and about and the yellow butterflies.  
Always she went back to those fields down in  
Devonshire, where she had jumped the brooks on Patty,  
her Pony [...] And there were the dogs; there were the  
rats; there were her father and mother on the lawn  
under the trees [...] (98)

The important difference here between pure memory and nostalgia lies in the non-specificity of the memory, which is evoked by the iterative effect: she had not “jumped the brooks on Patty” once, but several times; there were cats around, not once, but always; her parents *used* to sit under the trees. We see an absence of decisive time markers or singular occurrences and instead a vagueness that resembles nostalgic memory.

A rather common stylistic device to convey the faculty of transition from present into past is the use of an ellipsis. We see it in the most romantic analepsis in *The Great Gatsby* when Gatsby remembers his romance with



Daisy, “he could find out what that thing was.... [...] ....One autumn night, five years before [...]” (117), or when Yvonne remembers her father during the bullfight in *Under the Volcano*:

The poor old creature [the bull] seemed now indeed like someone being drawn, lured, into events of which he has no real comprehension, by people with whom he wishes to be friendly, even to play, who entice him by encouraging that wish and by whom, because they really despise and desire to humiliate him, he is finally entangled.

...Yvonne’s father made his way towards her, through the seats, hovering, responding eagerly as a child to anyone who held out a friendly hand, her father, whose laughter in memory still sounded so warmly rich and generous, and whom the small sepia photograph she still carried with her depicted as a young captain in the uniform of the Spanish-American war, with earnest candid eyes beneath a high fine brow, a full-lipped sensitive mouth beneath the dark silky moustache, and a cleft chin – her father, with his fatal craze for invention, who had once so confidently set out for Hawaii to make his fortune by raising pineapples.  
(259-60)

The transition from the bull to the father seems like an involuntary one, almost as if the image of the bull reminds Yvonne of her father. The ellipsis, besides signalling to the reader that we are now entering Yvonne’s memory, does simulate the kind of time that lingers between a present scene and the past scene.

### **Narrative Voice**

The *voice* in a narrative primarily is the voice of the narrator or narrators who report the narrative. When we explore the aspects of voice we study the

“relations between the narrator – plus, should the occasion arise, his or their narratee[s] – and the story he tells” (Genette 215).

The most crucial matter of the narrating’s voice is *when* the narrative is being narrated. *Subsequent* narrating is, as Genette acknowledges, by far the most common narrative (Genette 220). It is identified basically by the use of the past tense, or a progressive past, that creates a sense of something past (see earlier this chapter). However, as we will see, this past tense can occasionally change into present tense and still be categorized as a subsequent narrating. This is, for example, the case in the description of the parties in *The Great Gatsby*: “In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail **was** set up [...]. By seven o’clock the orchestra **has** arrived [...].” (my emphasis, 44). When this happens, we often refer to the mood of the narrating when the dominant narrating voice still is subsequent. The difference between a standard subsequent narrating and a nostalgic one lies in the role of the narrator and how he is presented. As we have seen in the *Recherche*, the typical nostalgic narrative voice is done by an *extradiegetic*, *homodiegetic* narrator – a narrator that is himself part of the story he tells and one who is in charge of all levels of the narrative. The narrating is also mostly being performed as a first-person narrative. Both the extradiegetic and the homodiegetic aspects of the narrating must be clearly announced in the opening of the narrative (in the frame favourably). “In ‘first-person’ narrative,” writes Genette, “this isotopy is evident from the beginning, where the narrator is presented right away as a character in the story [...].” (221). The extradiegetic narrative level can be established through a simple “I remember” or any such equivalence, the homodiegetic nature preferably through the use of the first person.

## Narrative Mood

Far more consequential for nostalgic narration is its *mood*. If voice is about who *tells*, mood is about the distance between story and narrative as well as who *sees* (focalization). If the narrator is nostalgic, what he narrates becomes nostalgic as well; thus we can speak of a nostalgic mood. Just as the subsequent narrative voice creates a temporal distance between the time of narration and the actual narrative, narrative mood also can alter the level of narrative detachment or involvement. In terms of distance in mood, Genette identifies two divergences: *narrative of events*, and *narrative of words* (164).

Narrative of events can never be totally mimetic because that would be utopic; instead we talk about different degrees of detail and the amount of the narrator's emotions and thoughts that are narrated. Literary nostalgia, as we have seen, depends more on lyrical and descriptive prose, and the importance of commentary and evaluation of the narrative from the narrator is crucial as well. Therefore, there seems to be a dependence on *scene* (detailed narrative) and a narrator who is involved in what he narrates, as opposed to a more transparent narration as is often the case with Hemingway.

Narrative of words deals with speech (both dialogue and thoughts), and compared to the narrative of events, we can speak about true mimetic style, *reported speech*, or direct speech, ("I will get married," said I to my mother") as well as more distanced, indirect speeches such as *narrated speech* (I informed my mother that I would get married) and *transposed speech* (I told my mother that I would get married) (Genette 171). The nostalgic mood favours generally more distanced speeches, since that does not obliterate the role of the narrator and the time of the narrating. The distance reinforces the pastness of the narrative. Thus, narratives that use a high degree of reported

speech, both as standard dialogue and in analepses, are less nostalgic.

It is easy to confuse the idea of narrative of words with that of the classic point of view, but Genette makes an important distinction between the two. Narrative of events and words are about the distance between the narrator and the narrative, but it concerns only speech or thought. For the other instance, whether or not the narrative is filtered through a character's consciousness is defined as focalization (Genette 189-94). A narrative can be *non-focalized*, that is classic narration where we deal with an omniscient narrator, *internally focalized* when the narrative is filtered through the mind of one character, and *externally focalized* where the narration is limited by what a character choose to report, often called objective narration (Genette 189-90). Focalization, as Genette is well aware of, "is not necessarily steady over the whole length of a narrative [...]" (191). Narrative of events is strongly coloured by the emotional status of the narrator. If the narrator also is a character in his own narrative, we cannot only speak of narrative of events but focalization as well. When we have an extradiegetic, homodiegetic narrator, situations can arise when we have to separate the narrator and the character. We will then refer to the narrator and the character as *the Narrator* and *the Hero* (Genette 252).

### **Free Indirect Speech<sup>42</sup>**

There are several suggestions that there is a relationship between past progressives and free indirect speech (FIS) in the way that they reside *between* temporal units (see Erlich; Raybould). Toolan writes about FIS that it "has formal characteristics which seem to locate it somewhere between direct and indirect speech: it retains the back-shifted tenses and third-person pronouns

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<sup>42</sup> I use Genette's term which means the same as *Free Indirect Discourse* or *Free Indirect Style*.

of indirect speech, but 'freely' dispenses with any framing introductory clause (such as *he thought, she said*)" (74). FIS is described by Genette as a narration when "the narrator takes on the speech of the character, or, if one prefers, the character speaks through the voice of the narrator, and the two instances are then *merged* [...]" (174). This is contrasted with the stream of consciousness, or what Genette names *immediate speech*, where "the narrator is obliterated and the character *substitutes* for him" (174). To prove my point that FIS is a more nostalgic narrating mode than that of the immediate speech, let us take a look at the most famous immediate speech to date, Molly's soliloquy in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922):

[...] so there you are they might as well try to stop the  
sun from rising tomorrow the sun shines for you he  
said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons  
on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat  
the day I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him  
the bit of seedcake out of my mouth and it was leapyear  
like now yes 16 years ago my God after that long kiss I  
near lost my breath yes he said I was a flower of the  
mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes  
that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun  
shines for you today [...] (643)

I have deliberately chosen a segment that is nostalgic to prove the point. The nostalgic aspects lie in both the use of a few past progressives, especially when the memory starts, "we were lying," in the memorial aspect due to the use of "16 year's ago," and in the nostalgic imagery's details of sensuality. Besides that, the tone of the narration is strangely present and intimate as immediate speech usually tends to be even though it is narrated in past tense. The immediate speech neutralizes the pastness of the narration due to the lack of either proleptic devices that remind us of the narrator, especially

when the duration of the speech is as long as in this case. However, I also think that it is in the private, intimate nature of the immediate speech that the possibilities of nostalgic identification diminish, even though this intimacy in a certain sense invites the reader into an inner consciousness that at least resembles nostalgic consciousness. The loss of a higher narrative instance in the immediate speech (because of its intimacy and internal focalization) annihilates the sense of a nostalgic past due to the lack of a narrative present point of departure where the narration stems from; an obvious example is “I remembered.”

Molly’s soliloquy is, of course, extreme, but let us explore the other end of fictive interior consciousness in another earlier work by Joyce, “The Dead”:

He [Gabriel] watched her while she slept, as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife. His curious eyes rested long upon her face and on her hair: and, as he thought of what she must have been then, in that time of her first girlish beauty, a strange, friendly pity for her entered his soul. (*Dubliners* 254)

We are clearly entering the mind of Gabriel here, but it should rather be considered indirect speech rather than free indirect speech since the narration stays faithfully in the third person and the use of “he thought” indicates higher narrative control. We never enter into this sense of free consciousness. Just one paragraph down we can notice a subtle change:

He wondered at his riot of emotions of an hour before. From what had it proceeded? From his aunt’s supper, from his own foolish speech, from the wine and dancing, the merry-making when saying good night in

the hall, the pleasure of the walk along the river in the snow. Poor Aunt Julia! She, too, would soon be a shade with the shade of Patrick Morkan and his horse. He had caught that haggard look upon her face for a moment when she was singing *Arrayed for the Bridal*. Soon, perhaps, he would be sitting in that same drawing-room, dressed in black, his silk hat on his knees. The blinds would be drawn down and Aunt Kate would be sitting beside him, crying and blowing her nose and telling him how Julia had died. He would cast about in his mind for some words that might console her, and would find only lame and useless ones. Yes, yes: that would happen very soon. (*Dubliners* 254-55)

What we see here is much less narrative authorial control. Although we still never leave the third person and enter into first person narration, it still feels much more as if we are entering the consciousness of Gabriel. This feeling of internal focalization stems from the notion of imaginative associations from the extended list of possible events that caused his emotions, but also the details of his fantasies about the future. It is exactly the kind of nostalgic proleptic movements we discussed earlier about Yvonne's anticipation of her house in *Under the Volcano*. They are clearly his fantasies and not the extradiegetic narrator's. But first and foremost it is the sudden personal exclamations such as "Poor Aunt Julia!" and later "Yes, yes: that would happen very soon" that clearly signals the free indirect speech.

In this way it resembles Woolf's style in *Mrs Dalloway* in the tension between authorial voice and the inner voice of a character, the changeable focalization between non-focalized and internally focalized discourse. Randall Stevenson writes in *Modernist Fiction: An Introduction* (1992) about Woolf's particular style in *Mrs Dalloway* and how the inner voice "never replaces the author's completely" and that exclamations and "frequent cues

such as 'thought Clarissa Dalloway' [...] are a constant reminder of an authorial organization and presentation of thoughts" (*Modernist Fiction* 54). The highly nostalgic style of Woolf can partly be directed to her particular sudden insertions of FIS, stretching it at times almost towards a stream of consciousness but never allowing a total independence from the extradiegetic narration. She usually avoids a first person present tense narration, but instead, as Stevenson recognizes, alters between "she," "we," and "one" (*Modernist Fiction* 54). One exception seems to be Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) where, at first sight, the six characters all wonder in first person present tense. The use of recurring "said" and a quite ordinary punctuation do not allow the monologues to become a complete immediate speech. Instead, the author's voice is always present. Stevenson writes that the inner life of the characters "is presented almost as if written in a letter. Their thoughts are carefully organized, clearly expressed, and show a sophisticated capacity to find metaphors for states of mind and the various pangs of contact between consciousness and the intractable world around it" (*Modernist Fiction* 54).

If we return to the very nostalgic end of "The Dead," we notice how the text slowly invites us to share the fundamental truth of the story through Gabriel's imagination without losing the nostalgic narrative tone of the subsequent narrative instance. It started with a rather classic indirect speech and then entered into a free indirect speech. The final step is not, as expected, that of immediate speech, but rather something more complex:

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set



out on his journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead. (255-56)

There is no doubt that the dream of travelling westward is Gabriel's own. The next sentence, however, is puzzling since it at first seems to fit perfectly in the exclamation theory with a "Yes." What follows after the colon is information about where it is snowing right now in Ireland. Or is it? Gabriel watches the flakes "sleepily" and thus we can imagine that he is in a state between being awake and asleep. Can this state account for his mind wandering around the island imagining snow at certain places he knows? It is impossible to be certain, but it seems probable since the last image belongs to the grave of Michael Furey who is, of course, closely connected to the emotional state he is in. "His soul" must refer to Gabriel's soul, since there is no other indication in the last pages that the subjects mean anything else than what is clearly referred to. The swooning could mean falling a sleep or dreaming, and the final sensation is the sound of the snow which in that exact moment gives Gabriel a nostalgic notion of past and future times. In a reading like this, it appears that the whole ending is, indeed, part of Gabriel's inner world, focalized entirely through him, but the narration muddles this fact, and we can read it as a purely non-focalized statement as well. It is this

exact ambiguity in the narration that creates a nostalgic mood, the presence of both the temporality of narration and the temporality of character consciousness. The flexibility in tense, which allows for a broader variety of durations and presence, is more accessible in FIS than in immediate speech. This is not to say that any other narration cannot be nostalgic – it depends deeply on other facts as well – but that there is something particularly nostalgic about varieties of free indirect speech.

### **The Phenomenology of Childhood**

As we will see in chapter five about childhood as nostalgic imagery, the use of childhood in order to evoke nostalgia about the reader's own childhood is a proven strategy. It is also possible to extend this further, to actually transport the reader into not only the idealized world of childhood, but more so into the very phenomenological experience of childhood through the use of different kind of narrative moods. We will look at two such possible identifications.

#### **The phenomenology of Childhood One: *The Waves***

The initial chapter in Woolf's *The Waves* is a journey for the reader through the consciousness of childhood, which through its phenomenological approach opens up the possibility of childhood identification and hence nostalgia. Although the six children do employ some different personal characteristics, they share a common non-linguistic syntax. The slight variety in their respective personalities helps the reader to find one of them to identify more directly with.

Steve Pinkerton has briefly explored this idea of childhood consciousness in his article, "Linguistic and Erotic Innocence in Virginia

Woolf's *The Waves*," where he notices the children's "infantile relation to language [...]" (75). He discusses their wide use of catachresis that at times "[suggests] the poetic fecundity of a child's mind [...]" (75). It is an accurate description of a style that creates the odd and liberated metaphoric world of a child who has to make up their own language in order to communicate, or understand phenomena yet unknown to them. Thus, leaves "are gathered round the window like pointed ears [...]" (*The Waves* 4), and when "the smoke rises, sleep curls off the roof like a mist [...]" (5), "[b]ubbles form on the floor of the saucepan [...]" (5), and "the tablecloth, [is] flying white along the table [...]" (5).

The use of poetic catachresis is but one aspect of the childhood consciousness in the first chapter. Notable is the microscopic view the children possess, and how disjointed one impression is from another. The microscopic aspect creates a world of wonder and a world where sensations come before intellect. This becomes obvious already in the first six soliloquies:

'I see a ring,' said Bernard, 'hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light.'

'I see a slab of pale yellow,' said Susan, 'spreading away until it meets a purple stripe.'

'I hear a sound,' said Rhoda, 'cheep, chirp, cheep, chirp; going up and down.'

'I see a globe,' said Neville, 'hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill.'

'I see a crimson tassel,' said Jinny, 'twisted with gold threads.'

'I hear something stamping,' said Louis, 'A great beast's foot is chained. It stamps, and stamps, and stamps.' (*The Waves* 4)

Each impression is either embedded with “I see” or “I hear,” and this immediately establishes the importance of the sensational aspect of the impression. Colours, shapes, or sounds, usually described with onomatopoetic words, catch the children’s imagination. The impressions are unrelated, and the exact impression they are trying to convey is still uncertain. The use of “I” not only forces the reader into the subjectivity of each child, but also illustrates how isolated each individual subjectivity is, because communication with other children is not yet developed. This isolation of each child changes immediately in the second round of impressions when this imminent “I” is abandoned for a communicative word. “Look at the spider’s web on the corner of the balcony [...]” (4) is what Bernard says to the others. This means that the other impressions are conducted within the same space, the garden, and are still very much divided through the different children’s minds. We also notice this change from an isolated subject experiencing sensations into a subject aware of its own body. “Stones are cold to my feet [...]” (4) says Neville, and this is countered by Jinny’s sensation: “The back of my hand burns [...] but the palm is clammy and damp with dew [...]” (4). It is not only the syntax of children that gives the impression of early childhood; it is also the choice of impressions that carry childhood and nostalgic weight in their remarkable detail.

We also notice the duration of the impressions, which start out small and then become more entangled with other impressions. A couple of pages later Jinny expresses a line of thought that is a fast development from the first isolated impressions:

'I was running,' said Jinny, 'after breakfast. I saw leaves moving in a hole in the hedge. I thought, "That is a bird on its nest." I parted them and looked; but there was no bird on a nest. The leaves went on moving. I was frightened. I ran past Susan, past Rhoda, and Neville and Bernard in the tool-house talking. I cried as I ran, faster and faster. What moved the leaves? What moves my heart, my legs? And I dashed in here, seeing you green as a bush, like a branch, very still, Louis, with your eyes fixed. "Is he dead?" I thought, and kissed you, with my heart jumping under my pink frock like the leaves, which go on moving, though there is nothing to move them. Now I smell geraniums; I smell earth mould. I dance. I ripple. I am thrown over you like a net of light. I lie quivering flung over you.' (6)

As Pinkerton observes, now the use of "I" coincides with the use of "my" which "negotiate the self as both subject and object of desire" (Pinkerton 76). The sequence above shows a development towards more prosaic language – gone is the catachresis and the fragmented way of perception. Added is a self-knowledge and awareness of their own physiques. The description of the first innocent kiss is very precise in its consequences.

Although the prose becomes more "ordinary" as we follow the development of the children, their particular childhood perception prevails. Reading the first two chapters is a phenomenological experience of the process of a child maturing. In the way the six children represent six different personalities, there are further possibilities for childhood identification. This reading process makes it possible to experience nostalgia through the strong emotional reminder of one's own childhood.

### **The Phenomenology of Childhood Two: Tarjei Vesaas' *Is-slottet* [*The Ice Palace*]**

The most important factor that creates a childhood consciousness in Tarjei Vesaas' *Is-slottet* [*The Ice Palace*] (1963) is undoubtedly the extensive use of free indirect speech in order to captivate the inner world of the two children, mainly that of Siss. It is a FIS that, for the most part, is lacking any initial word signal (such as "thought") that obscures the fact that it is FIS. Through the use of FIS, the world of the children or childhood is communicated through a similar, but less radical, focalization as we have seen in *The Waves*. The lack of rationality, limitations in expression, simplicity, repetitions, and a tense detailed experience of the physical, form the phenomenological base for childhood identification.

FIS works much better in conveying this childhood experience than a stream of consciousness narration, because of its unusual feeling of a mixture between the real and the unreal, between reality and dream. This stems from the intimacy of the FIS while at the same time it retains the use of third person narration. When one reads the subject "she," one is eventually assured that this "she" is in fact "I." The narration mixes factual events and enters into FIS without any warning. For example, on the very first page we are transported into FIS only through the use of the word "thoughts":

She gave a start. A loud noise had interrupted her thoughts, her expectancy; a noise like a long-drawn out crack, moving further and further off, while the sound died away. [...]

Biting cold. But Siss was not afraid of the *cold*. It wasn't *that*. She had started at the noise in the dark, but then she stepped out steadily along the road. (7-8)

"She gave a start" can refer to both an omniscient action, but also that she *felt* startled. The use of "her thoughts" clearly indicates that we are and have been inside her consciousness. The thoughts that were interrupted were that she "was on her way [...] to something unfamiliar, which was why it was so exciting" (7). The extensive use of sensational descriptions, as in *The Waves*, is already declared by the rather specific description of the sounds of the ice from the lake. Sentences are generally short and somewhat fragmented in order to show the fragmented but poetic world of the child. Even a phrase as short as "Biting cold," where there is a lack of subject and verb, confirms both that this is what she feels and what she thinks. These two words are the ones one would use if one thought out loud that it, indeed, was biting cold. The mystery and the irrational are then unfolded through a phrase such as "It wasn't *that*."

The apparent, but subtle, perception of the child can be seen in a phrase such as "Auntie seemed to be talkative [...]" (18). A non-focalized narrator would hardly use the word "seemed" since he would know if she was talkative or not. Obviously, we find this kind of expression in classic narration, but in this case the "seemed" appears to indicate how Siss is experiencing Auntie.

The children's experience of the world is charged with repetitions in order to show how the frames from within their minds are working. Instead of using different expressions or synonyms as a normal writer would, the repetitions illustrate the lack within their consciousness to find these variations in experience. They also connect, in a poetic way, situations and feelings with each other, especially when these are forceful. Thus we find the odd phrase "gleams and radiance" repeated four times in one paragraph when Siss and Unn are looking at themselves in the mirror (23), and Siss

repeatedly refers to her fear of the dark as something that is “at the sides of the road” (32-34) while she heads home from Unn in the night.

Likewise, in the cardinal chapter “The Ice Palace” when Unn meets her fate in the ice formation at the waterfall commonly referred to as the Ice Palace, her experience is conveyed with greatest emotional strength through her observant senses, as well as through the limitations of her language. “The black lake” and “rhime-white trees,” and close variations on these, occur regularly within this chapter as well as a return of the previous “gleams and radiance.”

The simulation of children’s rationale is to be found here as well. It can be simple things such as a forest being “hostile” or a fear of falling “down into a hollow where the shadows were [...]” (45) where the odd and charged words “hostile” and “shadows” communicate this rationale. It also follows closely to a child’s line of thinking as when Unn is meditating upon why she could not go to school:

It was no use sitting down and saying that she didn’t want to go to school. Auntie would never accept that. It was too late to say she was ill too—besides, she was not in the habit of making excuses. She looked at herself quickly in the mirror: she did not look the least bit ill, it was no use telling fibs. She would leave for school as usual, and then make off before she met anyone. Make off and hide until school was over. (38)

First and foremost this cardinal chapter echoes the sense of the microscopic experience we saw in *The Waves*, where the details of sensation predominate as in the description of the ice on the lake:



Even the bottom was white with rime and had the thick layer of steel-ice on top of it. Frozen into this block of ice were broad, sword-shaped leaves, thin straws, seeds and detritus from the woods, a brown, straddling ant—all mingled with bubbles that had formed and which appeared clearly as beads when the sun's rays reached them. (42)

Here the sentences are much longer, since this is not a fragmented experience but a series of impressions tied together either in the thought process or in the chronology in which Unn sees these things. The use of sounds to evoke the impression of the waterfall becomes an elegant transition from far to near. It starts with a “distant roar” (45) and the assertion that you are “not supposed to be able to hear the falls from here” (45). Then the stream’s “noiseless water beg[ins] to whisper” (45), later making “more noise” (46) until it “surge[s] more loudly” (46) and the roar suddenly is much “stronger” (47). When she gets closer to the falls, the sounds become more onomatopoetic. There is a “booming” (48) and the “water dashe[s] itself into white foam” (48) and “plunge[s] down in the middle” (48).

In much the same way as in *The Waves*, our experience of the world through the consciousness of the children allows for identification with the world of the child and thus our own childhood. This effect is achieved by using free indirect speech as well as internal focalization.

### **Distance and Presence in *The Great Gatsby***

The nostalgic experience depends much on the narrating’s alternation between *presence* and *distance*. This very opposition activates the essence of the nostalgic experience’s sense of now and then. More so, the distant mood and voice in narration must not annihilate the possibility of engaging the

reader in certain scenes when distance is not desired but rather a strong sensational presence should be achieved. Distance creates the pleasurable sense of something past, while presence can fuel this past with a vivid, nostalgic, almost surreal, atmosphere. A changeable degree of presence and distance can thus affect the emotional content of the reading experience; this means that a narrative does not have to maintain a strict focalization during the whole narration, but it can vary.

Distance is created through the use of subsequent narration and the use of a narrator who is somewhat removed from the events and characters he is describing. Distance can also be achieved if the narrator himself is a character in the story. This distant mood almost always requires a non-focalized narration.

Presence is created basically through activating the mood so that it is close to either the consciousness of the character or narrator. This entails internal focalization as well as the use of free indirect speech and immediate speech. We also see a higher use of the descriptive pause, longer durations in scenes, and an inclusion of the reader in the intimacy of the narrative by either activating him in the reading process or clearly addressing him as a narratee.

The narrator in *The Great Gatsby* conforms to the classic nostalgic narrator we find in the *Recherche*: the extradiegetic homodiegetic first-person narrator. As an extradiegetic narrator he creates distance just by having the highest narrative control over all narrative levels. This distance is pushed further through the use of subsequent narration. From the very opening of *The Great Gatsby*, we are aware of these characteristics of the narrator. The first sentence, "In my younger and more vulnerable years [...]" (5) establishes the homodiegetic first-person. The extradiegetic level of narrating

is not that obvious but reaches awareness gradually. First Nick establishes the temporal point of narrating: "When I came back from the East last autumn [...]" (6). Very soon we become aware that the extradiegetic level will be replaced in the most part by an intradiegetic level – the summer of 1922. The intradiegetic level is prepared by smoothly mentioning people and events from the summer of 1922 and how these have affected Nick. If he is narrating somewhere later than autumn, his *reach* back to the summer will be between four and thirteen months, approximately. Hence, we can speak of a subsequent narration within the subsequent narration, a kind of double distance. The clear analepsis occurs on page 7:

Father agreed to finance me for a year and after various delays I came east, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two.

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city but it was a warm season and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town it sounded like a great idea. (7-8)

As we notice, the narration is still in this intradiegetic narrative performed by the extradiegetic narrator. The distance is regained by the use of past tense and indirect speech (the young man suggested). So Nick retells something already in the past and consequently has knowledge of the ending of the story when he starts his narration.

Very soon this distance is shortened as we become more and more drawn into the summer of 1922. There are inserts of direct speech and a more descriptive prose and the extradiegetic commentaries become rare. At times we forget that this is actually not the first narrative, but are reminded in short flashes of the extradiegetic narration in phrases such as "It was Gatsby's

mansion. Or rather, as I didn't know Mr. Gatsby it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name" (9) or "and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there [...]" (10). When we enter the rich and detailed description of Buchanan's mansion, we are entirely immersed in the summer of 1922 and have forgotten the actual time of the subsequent narrating.

This alternation between distance and presence is then performed with varied intensity throughout the narrative. We will not lose the distant nostalgic mood but we must also at times become included in the events that are told in such a way that they can affect us nostalgically. Let us look how these alternations work more specifically.

First we have to study the different narrating moods because there is obviously a difference in narration between Nick the Narrator and the focalization of Nick the Hero. Sometimes the narration is coloured by the subsequent knowledge of Nick the Narrator and sometimes by the romantic imagination of Nick the Hero. When Nick the Narrator is at work, we feel that we enter a more classic non-focalized narration; Nick the Narrator reports things he should not be aware of and his narrating tone has an omniscient character even though he is a homodiegetic narrator. This is most obvious in the absolute ending of the novel, but it also shines through some parts of the text such as the details concerning Wilson and Myrtle before the accident (143-44). Of course Nick the Narrator's role doesn't necessarily have to be an accurate one; he can himself function as a "writer" and carefully control the different levels of focalization. Nick the Narrator is the extradiegetic master voice of the narrative, and his subsequent narration colours the narrative mood through its distance. An excellent example of

how the non-focalized mood from Nick the Narrator functions can be found in the following passage:

After two years I remember the rest of that day, and that night and the next day, only as an endless drill of police and photographers and newspaper men in and out of Gatsby's front door. A rope stretched across the main gate and a policeman by it kept out the curious, but little boys soon discovered that they could enter through my yard and there were always a few of them clustered open-mouthed about the pool. (171)

The almost matter-of-fact tone, the omission of details, less diegetic style, and the time marker of "after two years" creates a distant tone about the whole event.

There are also times when we as readers need to be mesmerized through the events of the present story and, in those cases, it feels like the scenes are rendered through Nick the hero. "The narrator almost always," writes Genette, "'knows' more than the hero, even if he himself is the hero, and therefore for the narrator focalization through the hero is a restriction of field just as artificial in the first person as in the third" (194). This artificial narration can be illustrated by this event that is clearly focalized through Nick the hero a few pages later:

It was Gatsby's father, a solemn old man very helpless and dismayed, bundled up in a long cheap ulster against the warm September day. His eyes leaked continuously with excitement and when I took the bag and umbrella from his hands he began to pull so incessantly at his sparse grey beard that I had difficulty in getting off his coat. He was on the point of collapse so I took him into the music room and made him sit

down while I sent for something to eat. But he wouldn't eat and the glass of milk spilled from his trembling hand. (175)

Here, without time markers, and with a more detailed and adjective rich prose, we enter into a more diegetic narrating mood. This style can be even more immediate by the change from past tense into present:

Suddenly one of these gypsies in trembling opal seizes a cocktail out of the air, dumps it down for courage and moving her hands like Frisco dances out alone on the canvas platform. A momentary hush; the orchestra leader varies his rhythm obligingly for her and there is a burst of chatter as the erroneous news goes around that she is Gilda Gray's understudy from the "Follies." The party has begun. (45)

What is gained here is that the reader "perceives it *directly*" but is at the same time "avoiding that removal to a distance necessitated by retrospective first-person narration [...]" (Friedman 1164). However, these changes in focalization are limited and we should call them *alterations* "when the coherence of the whole still remains strong enough for the notion of dominant mode/mood to continue relevant" (Genette 195).

Through the non-focalization of Nick the Narrator our experience is decided through his choice of words and the tone of his commentary. Since his narrating tone obviously is sad or nostalgic our reading experience will also be nostalgic. When there is a change to a focalization of Nick the Hero we notice an increase in his use of a highly lyrical language, which in many ways conforms to the nostalgic imagery from romanticism in choice of words and symbols in order to lure us into his nostalgic adventure. The distant mood of Nick the Narrator draws us into the feeling of past times, but it is

more favourable to change into the internalized focalization of Nick the Hero at instances when it is important to seduce us into a present engagement. This usually creates a more detailed report of events, more of a diegesis. And these details allow for descriptions of scenes that carry nostalgic connotations.

The focalization of Nick the Hero also constitutes the possibility of a higher presence through the use of immediate speech when characters tell their own stories. We must not forget that the presence of the prose is controlled by the highest narrative instance, Nick the Narrator. This often constitutes a commentary or a change from immediate speech into reported speech. In fact, most of the analepses that stem from Gatsby himself are carried out through the more distanced extradiegetic narrator in order to establish them as something past. However, they are then filtered through, not Gatsby, but something that resembles the romantic imagination of Nick the Hero. The most important analepsis, when Gatsby tells Nick about his love meeting with Daisy, starts distantly with Nick the narrator confirming that he “talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something [...]” (117). A gradual transition and alteration of focalization then takes place through the use of an ellipsis:

His life had been confused and disordered since then,  
but if he could once return to a certain starting place  
and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that  
thing was....

....One autumn night, five years before, they had  
been walking down the street when the leaves were  
falling, and they came to a place where there were no  
trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They  
stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was  
a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which

comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalk really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.  
(117)

The ellipsis works more like a transition than a clear temporal break because it is used in both the end of the analeptic instance and the beginning of the analepsis. The more romantic lyrical and detailed narrating enhances this memory and its narrative importance to the reader. Shortly afterwards, we seem to enter the mind of Gatsby totally when we share Gatsby's point of view through "the corner of his eye." We are perhaps fooled into believing that this is actually Gatsby's focalization when it is, in fact, Nick the Hero's or/and Nick the Narrator's. A similar alternation of focalization occurs somewhat later when Gatsby tells Nick about the last evenings before he has to leave for the war:

When they met again two days later it was Gatsby who was breathless, who was somehow betrayed. Her porch was bright with the bought luxury of star-shine; the wicker of the settee squeaked fashionably as she turned toward him and he kissed her curious and lovely mouth. She had caught a cold and it made her voice huskier and more charming than ever and Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor.

"I can't describe to you how surprised I was to find



out I loved her, old sport. (157)

Here we move from the distanced observation of time and state of mind into a lively portrait of the situation at the porch. The somewhat ironic, or perhaps judgmental, tone of Nick the Narrator is obvious, although the dominant tone still is one of romance. In this section we return to the immediate speech of Gatsby in order to return to a different narrative mood before entering the focalization of Nick the narrator.

As we have seen, the careful disposition of narrative mood and voice can either distance us or include us in the narrative. The alternation between these two modes carries nostalgic value through the ways it plays with nostalgia's different temporal poles of past and present. More importantly, it can create a sense of nostalgia through the notion of past events (distance) as well as triggering our own internal nostalgia in lyrical, descriptive narration (presence).

## Hypothetical Nostalgia

“‘Sometimes,’ said Julia, ‘I feel the past and the future pressing so hard on either side that there’s no room for the present at all’” (Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* 262).

Hypothetical time is the dissolution of time (see chapter two). In order to retreat into that idea let us repeat Morson's definition of it: “In hypothetical time, the entire sequence of past, present, and future comes for one reason or another to seem insubstantial. It is as if real time were in some other

dimension, to which we have no access; as if our lives were a dream and real life were something we can only dream of" (Morson 214). I think the actual sense of this can be firmly experienced in the opening of T. S. Eliot's first quartet:

Time present and time past  
Are both perhaps present in time future,  
And time future contained in time past.  
If all time is eternally present  
All time is unredeemable. (T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets* 13)

This passage accounts for the ways different times seem "insubstantial" with the result that time indeed is "unredeemable," therefore nostalgic. It represents the first of four possible ways that hypothetical nostalgia can be created. Eliot's opening defines the sense of a-temporality through its actual representation and description of it.

The second practice, close to the first one, involves imagery that further reinforces the image of hypothetical time. This can be illustrated by the use of the boat as a metaphor for time in Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*: "One hurries through, even though there's time: the past, the continent, is behind; the future is the glowing mouth in the side of the ship; the dim, turbulent alley is too confusedly the present" (259).

The third way of doing it is stylistically through the use of all three tenses simultaneously. In *The Waves* we experience all three temporalities within a short span in Susan's monologue: "Now I **climb** this Spanish hill; [...] I **have sunk** alone on the turf [...] We **may sink** and settle on the waves [...]" (my emphasis, 116).

The fourth possibility engages us in what we have spoken about earlier, an anachronic nostalgia that we can call "omnitemporality,"

borrowing the term from Erich Auerbach (545). Omnitemporality usually springs out of the prolepsis since prolepsis, preferably from a narrative that includes an omniscient subsequent narrator, seems to establish all kinds of temporal possibilities by announcing the subsequent omniscient narrating instance. Genette describes this omnitemporality as “a multitude of ‘telescopic’ relationships” between all story events both spatially and temporally, organized by the narrator who “hold[s] all of its threads simultaneously [...]” (78). Thus, the anachronic narrative, that uses a variety of analepses and prolepses, has the capacity to create an omnitemporality that diminishes the focus on one temporality and delivers an impression of timelessness.

Let us look at how the idea of hypothetical nostalgia functions more pragmatically in a real context. In order to do so, we will analyze the end of *The Great Gatsby*.

### **Hypothetical Nostalgia in *The Great Gatsby***

The temporal tone of the narrative in *The Great Gatsby* lingers between the time of narrating and the time of the analepses that tell the story of the summer of 1922. In addition, the narrative mood and voice belongs, with few exceptions, entirely to either Nick the Narrator or Nick the Hero. When we approach the last four paragraphs, the clear change in the narrating can seem confusing at times. Christine Johnson writes that this “deliberate confusion is carried further through the constant passing from present to past, then to future, and later the expression of all three at the same time” (115). This temporal structure confirms the creation of a hypothetical nostalgic experience.

One aspect of this change in the narrative is how the narrating assumes a more non-focalized quality than we have been used to. It is apparent that the actual ending of the novel does not evoke the same distinct feeling of a “now” and “then” that we can observe in the main part of the narrative. We are prepared for a mythologization of the summer of 1922, an experience that rises out of Gatsby’s tragedy and becomes a universal truth of human restlessness and unwillingness to live in the present. It is therefore natural that time, in some way, is dissolved in the end. The universalization that is derived from the mythologization, both thematically and stylistically, voids the novel’s temporal structure. The mythologization creates a kind of non-fleeting dimension that “resembles,” as Hart implies, “the mythic world” (406-07). Hart continues defining the mythic time as a utopian one “which is generally designated as golden and paradisal because all idealizations of the actual present are there realized” (411). There always resides an aspect of virginal dreams of the past in the utopian ideal of the future, like the untouched soil of a continent before the explorative eyes of the Dutch Sailors. We can also approach this dissolution of time as something that “takes on beyond reality, beyond space, beyond time” (Johnson 114). Johnson notices that in the beginning of the last part, reality is represented only in the negative (114): “the essential houses began to melt away,” and “Its vanished trees” (*The Great Gatsby* 189).

Since the golden era of hope and ambition symbolized by the Dutch sailors discovering a new continent abruptly is transformed into loss of faith and ruined achievements, the ontological nostalgia is one of deepest irony. This irony might seem as far away from nostalgia as we can imagine, but the notion of the human enterprise as deeply entropic is an essence of the

nostalgic sentiment. The a-temporal utopian and mythological dream is the residence of the nostalgee.

In the epilogue, Nick Carraway is placed “among the ruins of the tragedy he has witnessed; his lyrical meditations on the significance of what he has seen are utterly convincing and evocative of a multitude of meaning” (James E. Miller, 87). The tone of the prose, and the distinct reflections of his experiences, suggest that it is the older and wiser Nick the Narrator, with a more distant relation to the summer events, that actually closes the narrative, rather than Nick the Hero. When Nick the Narrator transforms Gatsby’s story to a universal human experience, it is evident that it is not an instant reflection. The usually sober and concrete tone is replaced by one more prophetic and thematic:

I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors’ eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby’s house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an æsthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. [...]

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eludes us then, but that’s no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther.... And one fine morning—

—  
So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past. (189)

The shift to universality is not only signalled through the discussions around the Dutch sailors exploring the new continent but also in the prose itself. We leave the concrete summer of 1922 together with the “inessential houses” that begin to “melt away” and end up in mythic expositions about the new world: “the old island here that flowered once for the Dutch sailors’ eyes.” The dissolve between houses and island, Gautam Kundu writes, expresses the “difference between promise and achievement, between vision and reality [...]” (69). The transition is further indicated through elevating Gatsby’s dream into “the last and greatest of all human dreams” and the change of the subject from “Gatsby” to a more universal “man” in the same sentence. Furthermore, in “**Gatsby** believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before **us**” (my emphasis), the concrete subject of the narrative is substituted for the more collective “us,” and in the last sentences Gatsby has completely vanished to make room for “we,” “us,” and “our.”

Hypothetical time, with its fatalistic implications, is suggested by a final transformation of the novel’s recurring symbols and motifs. The “green light,” the lamp on Daisy’s dock, is substituted with “a fresh green breast” symbolizing the Dutch sailors’ utopian dream of the new world, a dream which through the words “fresh green breast” implies both a pastoral past and a new start. An even more deep human dream is exposed through the figurative connection to the mother’s breast, “the desire to be united again to nature as mother [...]” (Johnson 113). This “breast” has also been torn to pieces earlier this tragic summer of 1922: “[Myrtle’s] left breast was swinging loose like a flap [...]” (*The Great Gatsby* 145). We are receding both into the past, but also into the present; it is through the present that the past is defined. “The New World” is the future of the colonizers, but it is our present or past. In the beginning of the epilogue, the present is defined in negative

terms such as “vanished trees,” once a symbol for human striving, now chopped down to make room for Gatsby’s palace.

We have left Gatsby’s dream behind and, aided by the Dutch sailors’ dreams, reached our own longing. The summer of 1922 is still subtly present through the novel’s flower motifs, “the old island here that flowered” and in the way Gatsby’s dream about Daisy is connected with the Dutch Sailors’ dreams of a new world. The chopped down trees that once “pandered in whispers” (where “pander” eludes to forbidden love), both illustrate the new settlers’ exploitation of the innocent land and rouse Gatsby’s “deceitful attraction of the girl who is both too fragile and too corrupt to carry it” (Johnson 114). Furthermore, “this blue lawn” initiates the memory of Gatsby’s “blue gardens” in the description of the parties in chapter three, and the anticipation of Gatsby’s dream, that “he could hardly fail to grasp it,” evokes the scene when Nick first encounters Gatsby reaching out his arms towards the green light and the dream of Daisy.

The end of *Gatsby* includes all the themes and motifs of the novel. It incorporates the different emotional moods of the two nostalgic elements in an attempt to summarize the nostalgic experience and enhance it through universalization and mythologization. The style itself approaches nostalgic sentiment; the prose becomes more and more rhythmic the closer we get to the final image, “the current,” through a reduction of adjectives in favor of verbs, as well as through the use of shorter phrases. This evokes motion, perhaps a musical attempt to lure us out of our secret dreams, wishes, and longings. There is something deterministic in the way we are led inexorably towards the stream of life which represents the bleak reality of life. We “beat on,” fight through life, glance towards the future, but like “boats against the current” our fight is in vain and we are “borne back ceaselessly into the

past." It is human fate, and this fate is emphasized through the "alliterate b's [that] give that last sentence a decisive and final quality" (Johnson 117).

In the end, all dimensions of time are represented, even in one and the same sentence: "It **eluded** us **then** but that's no matter—**tomorrow** we **will** run faster" (my emphasis). We are caught in the hypothetical time, or in the timeless ontological restless web of human despair between promise and achievement.





## Chapter Five

### Nostalgic Tropes

#### Nostalgic Tropes

When we speak of nostalgic tropes we mean the use of imagery, symbols, metaphors, and recurring motifs that have the capacity to induce nostalgic sentiments in the reader. These tropes activate our sensations and emotions through their descriptive prose or carry nostalgic weight in their capacity for allusions and symbolism. The activating phase of these tropes will be traced back to certain quintessential aspects of the nostalgic experience, such as defined in chapter two and refined in the section about the essentials of nostalgia in chapter three. We will survey the terrain of nostalgic tropes under various headlines (such as ruins, seasons, voyages, and childhood) loosely categorizing the main essentials of nostalgic tropes. Obviously, this categorization gives an impression of a stricter division of different tropes than is actually the case. Many tropes use several approaches in order to connote nostalgia, and thus there is some overlap in the way they are presented. In addition, the term *trope* should not be used exclusively since some of the approaches to nostalgia in this chapter border on the thematic and contextual.

Necessarily, there is a speculative nature in the way the following readings and analyses are being performed. The personal nostalgic experience, the first phase of identification in the method developed in chapter one, is undeniably my own. As mentioned before, this can both exclude other nostalgic experiences and include more private ones, although the main object is to work as objectively as possible. I will not be addressing

my own biography in any way, but rather illustrating that there is a certain universal aspect of nostalgic tropes, at least universal in terms of the Western world. Drawing from the methodology developed in the previous chapters, this chapter will illustrate how this method can be executed. We are not aiming for a complete taxonomy of possible nostalgic tropes but for a few selected illustrative examples that will describe how our method can be used in other cases.

The concept of nostalgic tropes proceeds from the use and reuse of certain literary tropes in the history of literature, particularly the tropes established in the eighteenth-century Romantic pastoral and elegiac poetry. These tropes were then modified in the twentieth century to suit post-industrial imagery and theories but kept much of the essential aspects of early nostalgic tropes. Both modern and romantic nostalgic tropes share common ground in the way they approach the reader in their universal character, and this separates them from another kind of nostalgic imagery that we can refer to as *iconographic* imagery. Iconographic imagery, perhaps most evident in other art than literature, is the iconization of specific clichés that become markers for a certain time or era. An example of iconographic nostalgic imagery from the Victorian period is the idea of the estate, or from the Jazz age, the flapper, the bobbed hair, the Charleston. We will not further descend into this kind of nostalgic imagery since the private nature of these longings is difficult to incorporate in a more general theory of nostalgic experience. If we are nostalgic for the Jazz age *before* we read a story that deploys this era's specific imagery, then these tropes will satisfy our nostalgic urge. If we are *not* nostalgic about the Jazz age, then this iconographic imagery will play no part in an eventual nostalgic experience. When we discuss different types of nostalgic imagery and tropes, we will not focus on

those that do require any particular nostalgic focus, but rather those that are developed from the universal essential aspects of nostalgia.

We have to be aware of that since we are looking particularly at modern texts, we are not entirely dealing with a trans-historic perspective. Even though the essentials of nostalgia are the same and might find universal expressions, they will nevertheless be fine tuned to suit the particular time when they are being used. The strong reaction to modernity in general illustrates this issue, whereas the imagery of anti-modernity becomes very specific for the early twentieth century.

Before we enter our survey of modern nostalgic tropes, let us first backtrack to the origins of the nostalgic tropes in Romantic poetry in order to firmly identify some of the most common and practiced strategies for nostalgic identification. Afterwards, we will briefly explore how the nostalgic motivators create the conditions for the nostalgic literary experience.

### **The Romantic Nostalgic Tropes**

Aaron Santesso, in his very insightful *A Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia*, firmly locates the established tropes that were to be used in what he names British nostalgic poetry in the eighteenth century. Santesso primarily studies the nostalgic poetry of Pope, Gray, and Goldsmith and how they “popularized a body of nostalgic tropes, drawn from elegy and pastoral in the main [...]” (24). Surely, the word *popularized* is essential since we can trace many of these tropes back all the way to the antiquity, but we find a more obvious nostalgic strategy in the eighteenth century.

At that time, the main nostalgic tropes and themes were derived from the pastoral while its emotional weight stemmed from the elegy. Two very general nostalgic strategies that we have mentioned before are the

impersonal and idealized attitude, and the use of clear dichotomies in order to convey a sense of past and present (Santesso 25).

When we say “impersonal,” it is in the sense that the tropes and themes are not biographical or private, but more general. If they are too private the reader fails to comprehend the nostalgic value of them, but if they are more universal, like childhood for example, they simplify the nostalgic connection between the reader and the poem. This is one of the reasons why the nostalgic poets exchanged the pastoral shepherd with that of the child: “We can only sympathize imaginatively with a shepherd in a pastoral; we all have memories of childhood, and thus a personal connection to a child. [...] Personal memory would serve as an intimate connection between the poet and audience member, creating a powerful emotional energy [...]” (Santesso 71). Thus the poet is “able to engage with the reader’s own nostalgia [...]” (Santesso 71) through using a trope that irresistibly forces the reader into his own youth and childhood. The experience becomes personal, but the strategy is impersonal.

The idea of the idealized nostalgia originates in the pastoral’s preference, or longing for, another world such as Arcadia or the Golden Age, or less idealized and specified spaces such as childhood, nature, the exotic, or the rural world. The idealized spaces are, of course, related to that of the impersonal attitude. Santesso prefers to call the longing for utopian spaces *cultural nostalgia* (81) and they incorporate both spatial and ontological nostalgia. *Historical nostalgia* is reserved for idealized historical space and time such as in James Macpherson’s *The Works of Ossian* (1765) (Santesso 95-96). Representative for both kind of nostalgias are that they both show a lost world, whether it is a real one or a fictive one.

The classic nostalgic dichotomy is naturally observed in these idealized spaces as a reaction to the “present.” Santesso identifies several other typical nostalgic dichotomies in his study of pastoral poetry: “rural versus urban, happiness versus misery, simplicity versus sophistication, innocence versus corruption, hospitality versus suspicion, contentment versus ambition, agriculture versus industry, self-sufficiency versus economic reliance [...]” (147). In particular Gray’s “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” serves as an example for Santesso on how this dichotomy works:

[...] the poem actually moves forward through the use of various binary oppositions or dichotomies: childhood as superior to adulthood, the country as superior to the city, a semimythical Edenic site as superior to the realistic squalor and evil of the modern world, simplicity as superior to complexity. These dichotomies—along with tropes such as the happy depiction of schooldays, childish games, innocent and happy competition or interaction—would recur in numerous nostalgic poems later in the century. (72)

Santesso also identifies that the general structure, the temporality of the poem, follows the classical dichotomy of pleasure and regret, in that it first engages the reader into the pleasantness of childhood then confronts him with the more unpleasant reality (71). The idea that the nostalgic binaries can affect the structure of the poem is also mentioned by Laurence Lerner in *The Uses of Nostalgia: Studies in Pastoral Poetry* (1972): “For nostalgia posits two different times, a present and a longed-for-past, and on this contrast a poem can be built” (44). The idea of the nostalgic structure will be further examined in chapter six, but the notion of the dichotomy between

present and past will prove important also in the nostalgic imagery.

Consequently, the conventions of modern nostalgic tropes evolve out of the idealized spaces and the nostalgic dichotomies from romantic nostalgic poetry. The most common tropes are the tropes of idyllic, innocent childhood; the nostalgic childhood tropes, therefore, will then be everything associated with childhood such as children, children's games, and toys. Santesso writes that Schiller argued that children are also associated with nature because "children were emblematic of a lost relationship with nature" (Santesso 70). Nostalgic childhood tropes, then, come to symbolize nature as well.

Likewise, we see a great representation of longings for other idealized spaces, whether it is the deserted village representing a lost rural life style in Goldsmiths' "The Deserted Village" or a fondness for the exotic in terms of idealized savages, natives, and simplicity in Gray's "The Progress of Poesy."

In addition, several tropes function as a reminder of passing times such as the use of astronomical imagery in some of Dryden's elegies which are associated with "the ideas of decay, collapse, and change [...]" (Santesso 34) or the potent symbol of the *ruin* as a metaphor for change as in this stanza from Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe":

An ancient fabrick, rais'd t' inform the sight,  
There stood of yore, and *Barbican* it hight:  
A watch Tower once,; but now, so Fate ordains,  
Of all the Pile an empty name remains. (*lines 66-69*)

The ruin becomes symptomatic for the time arrow in that everything ("so Fate ordains") inevitably will decay and die.

Santesso concludes that “[m]odern nostalgic tropes might be different—white picket fences rather than village squares—but certain tropes still act as triggers that cause us to engage in nostalgic reflection” (188). Many of the romantic nostalgic tropes can be identified in modern fiction.

### **Nostalgic Motivators**

The nostalgic tropes derived from the imagination of the romantic poets are inevitably connected with the idea of nostalgic motivation and memorative signs; they are based on symbols, images, or situations that can cause nostalgic reactions in the reader. Obviously, these tropes as nostalgic motivators are different from the real motivators. In internal nostalgia, our motivators are connected in one way or another to our private biography, whereas fictive nostalgic motivators aim either for a more external nostalgic consciousness or, at least as we saw with the romantic nostalgia, a more impersonal history. The universality of these tropes, then, possibly targets private memories through their very universal and open nature. Their vagueness allows for private identifications instead of exclusion. In the universality of, for example, childhood lies the possibility of a reader identifying the images or situation with his own private childhood. The tropes become transparent. In this case, we can only trace in theory the motivating aspect and its probability, and not the exact involvement of private memory. We can just be assured that this is the general chain of events and that the involvement of internal nostalgia is important in the fictive nostalgic experience. However, there might also be cases where the actual trope, its aesthetic quality as universal, triggers a less internal and more external nostalgia through the use of a convention and a cliché.



The memorative signs that fall into our category of nostalgic imagery are sensations and situations (see chapter two). Tropes containing material that alludes to or is associated with passing times, seasons, and recurring events prove effectual in evoking nostalgia. Let us look at a few examples of different kind of nostalgic tropes that use some, or all, of above memorative signs as a base for motivating nostalgic reactions. Since the catalyst of nostalgic tropes is the time arrow, we will start more generally with time, decay, universal grief and then move into more refined tropes that are based on these essentials. Before that, let us look at a key ingredient in nostalgic imagery: how a variety of our sensations are triggered. Just like the case with anachronies, nostalgic imagery benefits from addressing our sensations.

### **Attracting the Senses**

Willa Cather writes in *O Pioneers!* (1913):

There are few scenes more gratifying than a spring plowing in that country, where the furrows of a single field often lie a mile in length, and the brown earth, with such a strong, clean smell, and such a power of growth and fertility in it, yields itself eagerly to the plow; rolls away from the shear, not even dimming the brightness of the metal, with a soft, deep sigh of happiness. (29)

It is a remarkable memoir of the prairie in that the prose attracts many of our senses and creates a distinct physical, sensational experience in us. It is visually striking in the description of the metal plow, bright and shining in the spring sun accompanied by its metaphoric sound of happiness as well as the use of the onomatopoetic “roll.” What stands out is its olfactory approach, the clear smell of earth, a smell we all relate to. The image of the

plow triggers several sensations in us, and it is a good example of how nostalgic imagery works; in recreating the phenomenology of experience as a whole, it creates a higher degree of possible identification with either the literary past or one's own memories.

Vivid imagery that attracts the senses captures the reader's totality of senses and thus transports him into experiencing the situation or atmosphere with great emotion. This is perhaps more important when it comes to the evocation of an emotion and mood such as nostalgia. The physical aspect makes it more probable that the reader will associate the literary emotion with an event or mood of his own life and this will perhaps bear nostalgic connotations. As we have seen in chapter two, nostalgia is more often tied to strong sensations from sounds and smells, and in attracting these particular senses, nostalgic imagery opens up possible nostalgic connotations.

The representative quality of nostalgic imagery, like the romantic tropes, arises out of universal experiences of nature, landscapes, potentially romantic situations, and symbols that evoke the idea of time, the passing of time, and the repetition of time such as seasons. The sense of physicality does not necessary need to be lyrical in the sense of Woolf or Joyce, but we also find it, although with a different strategy, in the opening of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). Hemingway's barren and repetitious style actually reinforces the sense of cold autumn:

In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The

trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves. (3)

Although *A Farewell to Arms* is not explicitly a nostalgic story, with the exception of Henry missing some of his old friends like the priest, it can create a nostalgic experience in the reader. It is a very physical narrative, and the repetitions of words that are associated with landscape, weather, also associate indirectly to the physical. Usually it is a feeling of freezing, hunger, and tiredness. In the quotation above we encounter the words “dust” and “leaves” with such regularity that these keywords are hammered into our reading consciousness. We do not only read about autumn, we feel it. And feeling it allow us to emotionally connect this literary autumn with any strong memory of our own past autumns. Similarly, the presence of rain and fog in chapter twenty-four, when Henry spends a last evening with Catherine before boarding the train to the front, reinforces how this event becomes a particularly emotional one. Someone is “crossing the street in rain” (141), a “horse’s head [is] hanging in the rain” (141), they are walking “down the wet walk” (141) while “water [is] running in the gutter” (141). Two carabineers are “standing under the light just out of the rain” (142), the “rain [is] clear and transparent against the light from the station” (142), a porter’s shoulder’s are “up against the rain” (142) and Henry steps out of the carriage and “out into the rain” (142). Since the war atmosphere is not the summers of our youth but rather a cold and hungry muddy winter, the physical sense of this season creates an utter longing for something else, which accompanies, of course, the idea of the book about a farewell to war and a longing for peace. Hemingway manages to allow the reader to share

his characters' longing for a time and space outside war and winter through his physical prose, and this longing inhabits the nostalgia for the future almost in an ontological way.

It is not only in the physical that nostalgic memory works, but it is even more powerful when the imagery is infused with sounds or smell. Sound and smell are particularly important, since the occurrence of sound and smell simulates how our own memory works.

In *Tender is the Night*, as well as *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald often refers to music as a way to make his images more prone to nostalgic identification. In *Tender is the Night*, sounds can often be heard from a distance, as a way of conveying the act of hearing while not really participating at the same time. "The thin tunes, holding lost times and future hopes in liaison, twisted upon the Valais night" (29), "A small orchestra was playing astern" (335) or "Someone had brought a phonograph into the bar and they sat listening to 'The Wedding of the Painted Doll'" (316) are typical references to music. Fitzgerald often quotes lines from popular songs or titles, as in the last quotation here, and these popular references, of course, carry a stronger nostalgic weight for contemporary readers. Nevertheless, the eternal existence of a musical space does encourage and open up more possibilities for nostalgic experiences in any reader.

Evocations of smell are equally important, as we could see in the quotation above from *O Pioneers!* Olfactory sensations more than anything else, seem to be profoundly connected with memory. Hence the imagination of past autumn in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) is strongly built up around the scent of the gillyflowers "now yielded to the damp leaves [...]" (95). Smell can be activated less explicitly through associations to smell rather than descriptions of the smell itself. Such is the case in the description

of the orchard in *O Pioneers!* where the enumeration of flowers forcefully also carries olfactory values of summer in the experience:

All sorts of weeds and herbs and flowers had grown up there; splotches of wild larkspur, pale green-and-white spikes of hoarhound, plantations of wild cotton, tangles of foxtail and wild wheat. South of the apricot trees, cornering on the wheatfield, was Frank's alfalfa, where myriads of white and yellow butterflies were always fluttering above the purple blossoms. (58)

We have observed several examples of the ways imagery containing associations to sound and smell possibly trigger nostalgic memories in addressing the phenomenology of nostalgic memory. Although we will not analyze other sensations deeper, at least they should be mentioned. Taste has been proven to also have a nostalgic connotation as confirmed by the famous Madeleine cake in *Du côté de chez Swann*. Somewhat more unusual perhaps, but still persuasive, is the triggering of feelings of physical touch. The spring fields in *O Pioneers!* turn in winter into frozen ground "so hard that it bruises the foot to walk in the roads or in the ploughed fields" (73).

### **Clock Time**

The crucial element of nostalgia and nostalgic mood is undeniably the time arrow: the irreversibility of time and the fading of all stable molecules around us, whether that is a sand castle, a human life, or the universe. Most of the nostalgic tropes owe something to the teleological aspect of time, a matter which fundamentally causes the pain and melancholia of the nostalgia.

The famous dichotomy of clock time and inner time (Bergsonian duration) has proven a common strategy to exploit the teleological aspects of nostalgia. The occurrence of time markers, flagging clock time as an impatient but steady beat towards decay and death, are common enough. The most famous example is the use of clock time in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* where the recurring sound from Big Ben constantly reminds the reader of the time arrow, and this, in turn, becomes a huge contrast to the subjective Bergsonian time of the characters which enables a temporality that fights against clock time. Time markers can thus be as simple as a reminder of clocks, as in *Mrs Dalloway*, or time experienced by its characters such as Dick Diver "listening to time" while "listening to the buzz of the electric clock [...]" (Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night* 213). Time markers can also be more grammatical as an extended use of time indicators such as tense inflections and time adverbials. In our analysis of nostalgia in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) in chapter seven we will discuss the idea of time further.

### **Ruins and Decay**

The idea of the ruin as a prime symbol of decay and past time is a potent one. Nowhere is this stronger than in the notion of the sand castle that so quickly deteriorates into a sand ruin. A fine example of the use of ruin imagery is in the first chapter of *Under the Volcano* where we are thrown into an atmosphere of decay and ruins, a chapter which forms the spring board for past times since it is the last segment of the story with feelings of remembrance and forgetfulness for a day exactly one year before. M. Laurelle walks around "deserted swimming pools" (10), "dead tennis courts" (11), a sleeping platform (13), "a faded blue Ford, a total wreck" (19). The desolation is further enhanced by "small, black, ugly birds" (19), "[w]indy shadows

[that] swept the pavements" (29) and a "crash of thunder" which twitches off the street lights (30). These ruins, gloomy images, and sounds contain the sentiment of change and something lost but they also illustrate metaphorically the havoc of a man, Geoffrey Firmin. The perception of this angst reaches a climax in two images: a deserted plough and an abandoned palace. The image of the plough, more emblematic in its presentation as a silhouette, clearly indicates the decayed spirit of the consul through its allusion to a human form: "there was a row of dead trees. An abandoned plough, silhouetted against the sky, raised its arms to heaven in mute supplication [...]" (15). The abandoned palace creates an ever stronger sense of decay through the heavy use of negative adjectives and a prose stimulating primarily the olfactory senses:

The broken pink pillars, in the half-light, might have been waiting to fall down on him: the pool, covered with green scum, its steps torn away and hanging by one rotting clamp, to close over his head. The shattered evil-smelling chapel, overgrown with weeds, the crumbling walls, splashed with urine, on which scorpions lurked – wrecked entablature, sad archivolt, slippery stones covered with excreta – this place, where love had once brooded, seemed part of a nightmare.  
(20)

The insertion of the positive, past love, is an effective juxtaposition and accentuation to the decay which becomes a more pleasant alternative to the present. It reinforces the nostalgia in creating alternatives to the unpleasant present. The use of binaries once more focuses on the decay and makes it darker and stronger. Throughout the first chapter of *Under the Volcano*, we find numerous openings to idealized and mythological places that work in

contradiction to the abashed present. There are direct allusions to the “Earthly Paradise” (16) or more implicit references to biblical events, identified by Chris Ackerley and Lawrence J. Clipper (52), such as the allusion to psalm 8:3-5: “What, after all, was a Consul that one was mindful of him?” (*Under the Volcano* 35). Further biblical allusions are the etymology of the consul’s name, Geoffrey (“God’s peace” or “beloved of God”) (Ackerley and Clipper 32), and the constant references to him as Adam, the connections to Swedenborg, and Doré’s painting of Dante’s paradise (*Under the Volcano* 11). Hints of more mythological places are also found in the references to the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione, the old Aztec myths, in the sentence “Nights of the Culmination of the Pleiades!” (35), and references to *Atlantis* through a film (21). The consul’s high regard for William Blackstone, a man who left the Puritans in Massachusetts in 1635 to live close to the Indians and nature, seems to represent this general idea of the simplicity of life and man’s return to nature, “away from the people with ideas” (96). Together with a multitude of references to the Earthly Paradise or other mythological spaces, as well as more historical nostalgias prior to the age of modernity, these idealized spaces provide both a sense of longing and a contrast to the present tensions of a looming world war.

In Stephen King’s “The Body” we meet a similar, but more consequent strategy of infusing the town of his childhood with the ruins and changes of modern times. Although not ruins in the strict sense, the “moving company” (293) that replaces the old tree house, the “motorcycle track” (332) built on the overgrown scrubland, and the river that “had narrowed up quite a bit during the years between” (354) all represent change and become internal ruins. The notion that these changes are something bad, something simulating the passage of times, is conveyed through a brilliant metaphor



where the new suburbs “have spread out like the tentacles of a giant squid” (300).

As we have seen, the image of the ruin and representations of decay are excellent metaphors for triggering one of the essentials of nostalgia: that of the time arrow. Nostalgia might be a force against change and decay; however, these images of change and decay are the very ingredients that essentially trigger nostalgia.

### **Natural Elements**

Natural elements provide both change and stability, a set of binaries that can be very useful in creating nostalgic imagery. They convey romantic lyrical spaces as well as symbolize the passage of time and the universality of situations.

The deeply profound symbolism of water, sea, and especially waves has attracted human thought for ages through their associations with both the repetitiveness and passing of time. The waves’ notion of change and obfuscation, and their relation to very basic natural elements, made them appropriate both as the title and the essential motif in Woolf’s *The Waves*, a novel deeply engaged in the topic of time. The use of the interludes describing the changing character (different waves) of an unchangeable activity (waves) reminds the reader repetitively about the paradox of the passing of life and the universe’s circle of life through death and resurrection. This reinforces the sense of the individual fate of *one* life, and the insignificance of this one life in a cosmic perspective. Waves stimulate a backtracking activity since they erase our marks in the sand and thus our own identities. Just mentioning a wave in prose will not automatically convey all its associations. We need waves that sound, smell, and can be felt

and thus have the capacity to transport us to our own waves. Woolf manages to give her waves exactly this physical appearance in the absolute beginning of the narrative:

*The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it. Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.*

*As they neared the shore each bar rose, heaped itself, broke and swept a thin veil of white water across the sand. The wave paused, and then drew out again, sighing like a sleeper whose breath comes and goes unconsciously. (3)*

The analogy to the human activity of breathing forces the reader to associate these waves with life, in addition to the other associations he may make. More so, the analogy also relates to children, or children sleeping, and how we as adults listen to their breaths, which is highly appropriate since these waves are supposed to symbolize the aging of man in the change of their nature and appearance through the novel. Accordingly, we meet the protagonists as children when their heartbeats resemble “thick strokes moving” and potently sweeping “a thin veil of white water across the sand.” When the protagonists are older the waves also illustrate their older age as in this example of late middle age:

*Red and gold shot through the waves, in rapid running arrows, feathered with darkness. Erratically rays of light flashed and wandered, like signals from sunken islands, or darts shot through laurel groves by shameless, laughing boys. But the waves, as they neared the shore, were rubbed of light,*

*and fell in one long concussion, like a wall falling, a wall of grey stone, unpierced by any chink of light. (117)*

The late middle age waves are contrasted to the childhood waves (relatively light descriptions of childhood with smoothing and calm words, and waves that emancipated out of the sky as the sun rose) in a remembrance of those early waves. The brightness of the early waves is hinted at the description of rays of light that flash and wander erratically and the lostness of childhood established in the metaphor of "*signals from sunken islands*" as well as in the mentioning of "*laughing boys*." Through the sunset's colours and a wandering light which abruptly ends, we enter the reality of old age: the dark, utterly dark waves that are passionless and motionless. The last sentence in the book is even robbed of any kind of life, or at least prosaic life: "*The waves broke on the shore*" (167).

The idea of waves as a symbol is not novel at all, and just precisely because of that, it tends to function as a representation for the tragic and melancholic ingredients of life to the readers. The geniality of *The Waves* lies in the way the image of the waves alters and echoes the past images of the waves in order to contemplate the passage of time. The sensation of the waves also infiltrates the whole rhythm of the book, which further enhances its nostalgic potentials. "I am writing to a rhythm, not to a plot" (Woolf, *A Reflection of the Other Person* 204), wrote Woolf, and in fact the novel's tempo is governed by the rhythm of the waves. One could say that Woolf's style is an undulating style. Not only in the novel's general structure, as in the recurring interludes, do we find this rhythm but also in the text itself. The rhythm in the first waves, "*thick strokes moving, one after another, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually*" (3) can be likened

to how the characters are presented in a rhythmic fashion that resembles these first waves:

‘I see a ring,’ said Bernard, ‘hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light.’  
 ‘I see a slab of pale yellow,’ said Susan, ‘spreading away until it meets a purple stripe.’  
 ‘I hear a sound,’ said Rhoda, ‘cheep, chirp, cheep, chirp; going up and down.’  
 ‘I see a globe,’ said Neville, ‘hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill.’  
 ‘I see a crimson tassel,’ said Jinny, ‘twisted with gold threads.’  
 ‘I hear something stamping,’ said Louis. ‘A great beast’s foot is chained. It stamps, and stamps, and stamps.’ (4)

The rhythm of the waves is echoed in the use of the same opening word “I” in each sentence. Furthermore, every speaker’s line split by the word “said,” the absence of descriptions of how these lines are said, and even the repetitions within Rhoda’s and Louis’s lines, emphasize this rhythm. In addition, the tremendous over-representation of the “s,” “sh,” and “ch” sounds reverberate the sounds of the waves entering the shore.

Waves are a common motif for Woolf, and they are used frequently in *Jacob’s Room* (1922) and *Mrs Dalloway*, not only as a natural phenomena but also more figuratively: “Tears made all the dahlias in her garden undulate in red waves and flashed the glass house in her eyes [...]” (*Jacob’s Room* 1) and “this scent, this colour, and Miss Pym liking her, trusting her, were a wave which she let flow over her and surmount that hatred [...]” (*Mrs Dalloway* 10). In *To the Lighthouse* we meet the wave in numerous metaphors and images and one noteworthy example is when Mrs. Ramsay contemplates

how the waves alter meaning from being “a measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts and seemed consolingly to repeat over and over again [...] the words of some old cradle song [...]” to liken “a ghostly roll of drums [that] remorselessly beat the measure of life [...]” (19). The way in which the sea both comforts and creates existential broodings can be seen later when Lily Briscoe and William Bankes brood over the sea:

They both smiled, standing there. They both felt a common hilarity, excited by the moving waves; and then by the swift cutting race of a sailing boat, which, having sliced a curve in the bay, stopped; shivered; let its sail drop down; and then, with a natural instinct to complete the picture, after this swift movement, both of them looked at the dunes far away, and instead of merriment felt come over them some sadness – because the thing was completed partly, and partly because distant views seem to outlast by a million years (Lily thought) the gazer and to be communing already with a sky which beholds an earth entirely at rest. (24-25)

In a way, their reaction simulates the nostalgic reaction with its movement from “hilarity” into “sadness.” They appreciate the beauty of nature while still identifying that this beauty is not, what the waves suggest, eternal. However, in the end there will be “an earth entirely at rest.” The sense of this grief will be further explored under the section “Universal Grief” below.

The common image of the sea and water is infused with additional romance in the famous wading scene in Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. In a similar fashion as with Woolf, the lyrical language and presentation of the natural elements owe much to the Romanticists’ imaginations:

There was a long rivulet in the strand and, as he waded slowly up its course, he wondered at the endless drift of seaweed. Emerald and black and russet and olive, it moved beneath the current, swaying and turning. The water of the rivulet was dark with endless drift and mirrored the highdrifting clouds. The clouds were drifting above him silently and silently the seatangle was drifting below him and the grey warm air was still and a new wild life was singing in his veins.  
(184)

The musical pattering of the sentences' pausing elements creates a syntactical rhythm that corresponds with that of the drifting seaweed. The use of "and" in the second and final sentence creates this flow and adds a sense of awe to the experience through the *and's* impatient qualities. Similar to the romantic nostalgic poets who used astronomical symbols to represent the passing of time, the clouds in this sequence, and particularly their movements, also signal this passing of time. The two last sentences mirror each other and create a sense of cinematic fast motion that poetically adds to the romance and emotionality of this experience.

In addition to Woolf's waves, Joyce's wading sequence takes an image of time and life and their irreversibility and charges it with a proper romantic meeting, an idealization of love. The girl who stands still before the hero and gazes out to sea is likened to a "beautiful seabird" in order to nostalgically place her outside culture and inside a lost nature. The description of her creates an almost mythological figure in its idealization and sensuality:

Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane's and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and soft-hued as ivory, were bared almost to the hips, where the white fringes of her drawers were like

feathering of soft white down. Her slateblue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some darkplumaged dove. But her long hair was girlish: and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face. (185)

It could be argued that this scene is *just* romantic and *not* nostalgic, but there are elements that grant it this aura of nostalgia. We are stimulated nostalgically through the idealization of the woman and the placement of her in a typical detailed nostalgic scene where we observe her from a distance. Explicit is the joyful creation of a nostalgic memory, a nostalgic moment, but it seems to lack the last part of the nostalgic reaction: the melancholic disposition of the fading of this moment. And a moment it is, almost as if the world stops for a moment and as if the cyclic process of life suddenly comes to a still image: a gaze, a meeting when she feels his presence:

Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither; and a faint flame trembled on her cheek. (185)

To illustrate the stoppage of time, the use of audible and onomatopoetic words when she starts to wade again, is stressed in order to emphasize movement and movement's sounds. Furthermore, she enters into the cyclic world once again through the repetitions of the words "hither" and "thither" and is almost swallowed up by nature and memory. The coda of this section encourages us to see the wading episode as something lost. The memory is

still joyful but less enthusiastic, and a more saddened and wistful tone is experienced together with the protagonist. This effect is created by the cycle of falling asleep and awakening, a suitable metaphor for this transformation from exuberant happiness into melancholia. First the protagonist closes his eyes in remembrance of the recent meeting, a sensation that echoes several of the motifs from the actual wading scene:

His eyelids trembled as if they felt the vast cyclic movement of the earth and her watchers, trembled as if they felt the strange light of some new world. His soul was swooning into some new world, fantastic, dim, uncertain as under sea, traversed by cloudy shapes and beings. A world, a glimmer or a flower? Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by way of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than other. (186-87)

Then, when he awakens and contemplates his memory from the sand-hill there is a stroke of melancholia in his imagination:

Evening had fallen. A rim of the young moon cleft the pale waste of skyline, the rim of a silver hoop embedded in grey sand; and the tide was flowing in fast to the land with a low whisper of her waves, islanding a few last figures in distant pools. (187)

It is a more desolate atmosphere: gone are the "lightclad figures, wading and delving" (184); instead "a few last figures," isolated from each other, stand in a fast changing landscape that will soon turn into complete darkness. The tide will erase all tracks of these waders, including the girl herself.



## Seasons

The use of seasons, such as the autumn in *A Farewell to Arms*, or situational, ritual events such as Easter or Christmas, is a very common practice in order to remind the reader of times in his own life that function nostalgically (see chapter two). What could often be named the cliché of each season is what initiates this identification, mainly because they are more representational and impersonal. Therefore, there is a heavy over-representation of the use of clichés of seasons such as the crickets of summer, or the snow of winter in nostalgic narratives of the Western world.

One prime example that uses the concept of snow, winter and the season of Christmas to evoke nostalgia occurs in the scene when Nick remembers his childhood train rides home for Christmas in the end of *The Great Gatsby*:

One of my most vivid memories is of coming back west from prep school and later from college at Christmas time [...] I remember the fur coats of the girls returning from Miss This or That's and the chatter of frozen breath and the hands waving overhead as we caught sight of old acquaintances and the matchings of invitations: "Are you going to the Ordways'? the Herseys'? the Schultzes'?" and the long green tickets clasped right in our gloved hands. And last the murky yellow cars of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad looking cheerful as Christmas itself on the tracks beside the gate.

When we pulled out into the winter night and the real snow, our snow, began to stretch out beside us and twinkle against the windows, and the dim lights of small Wisconsin stations moved by, a sharp wild brace came suddenly into the air. We drew in deep breaths of it as we walked back from dinner through the cold vestibules, unutterably aware of our identity with this

country for one strange hour before we melted  
indistinguishably into it again.

That's my middle-west—not the wheat or the  
prairies or the lost Swede towns but the thrilling,  
returning trains of my youth and the street lamps and  
sleigh bells in the frosty dark and the shadows of holly  
wreaths thrown by lighted windows on the snow. (183-  
84)

It is a mixture of both specific details, such as family names, and the specific colour of the train cars and details that are more inclined towards a general memory of snow, winter, Christmas, and home. No matter nationality or time, these details will remind us of our own youthful train trips home for Christmas by describing some of the clichés of the Christmas season. We also recognize the rhythms seen in *The Waves* and *A Portrait of a Young Man*, especially in the use of multiple “and” in order to create a coherent tempo of awe and fascination and curiosity. It is primarily the narrator's implicit excitement to which we respond.

Just like winter has its clichés, summer seems to always be paralleled with the sound of crickets. Stephen King's (or the narrator's) perception of childhood summer in “The Body” is no exception, but he adds several other, less common but still convincing, connotations of summer. These connotations, although quite personal and exclusive, work very well in creating possible more impersonal identifications with childhood summer, mainly through the use of sounds. It is the sound of “change jingling” in the pockets while running, and “the sweet hum of crickets, the machine-gun roar of playing-cards riffing against the spokes of some kid's bicycle [...]” (341-42).

## Voyages

The train memory also touches upon another important nostalgic device, that of voyages. Voyaging is, in a way, a cultural equivalent to the natural wave. It represents change, movement, passing of time, and new spaces. It can be a movement from one place and time to another and thus incorporate both two temporalities and two worlds. Susan Anderson has pointed out in her article "Time, Subjectivity, and Modernism in E. Nesbit's Children's Fiction" that the use of moving devices has the powerful capacity to link different spaces and different times. She mentions the way the plane in *Mrs Dalloway* "emphasizes the spatial relationship of city and country [...]" (311) and the railway in Nesbit's *The Railway Children* "provides a similar metaphorical link between the children's lives before and after the arrest of their father [...]" (312).

The metaphor of travelling fits well into the dichotomy of nostalgia. It is fundamentally representative of our own memories of change and happiness. Fitzgerald, for example, is very fond of using the voyage as an expression for this kind of nostalgic space and time, be it in boats, cars, or trains. The voyage could be a "going home" as in Nick's memory of his train rides home for Christmas or as in Dick Diver's ride on a local train heading home for his father's funeral in *Tender is the Night*, where he sees "a star he knew, and a cold moon bright over Chesapeake Bay [...]" (258). Dick also hears "the rasping wheels of buckboards turning, the lovely fatuous voices, the sound of sluggish primeval rivers flowing softly under soft Indian names" (258).

Travelling could also be "going away," leaving something behind as in Fitzgerald's short story "'The Sensible Thing,'" where the main character, George, embarks on a train journey away from a lost love towards an

uncertain future. The memory of his love, fading irrecoverably into the past is conveyed brilliantly through the use of the nostalgic image of the train:

Past clanging street-crossings, gathering speed  
through wide suburban spaces toward the sunset.  
Perhaps she too would see the sunset and pause for a  
moment, turning, remembering, before he faded with  
her sleep into the past. The night's dusk would cover up  
forever the sun and the trees and the flowers and  
laughter of his young world. (159)

The sense of change is materialized through the dichotomy between urban space and nature (sunset) and in the way the descriptions of speed and of what is left behind (street-crossing, suburban space) mimics time itself. Using the sunset as a point of reference actually amplifies their growing distance while he is travelling down the train tracks. At the same time it retains the memory of their love. Metaphorically this journey results in an aging process; George is leaving the world of youth behind him as well as the memory. In the last sentence of this passage, we once again become acquainted with the nostalgic method of creating awe through the syntactical patterning of "and."

This sense of leaving something behind is also significant when Charles Ryder reflects upon his last visit to Brideshead in *Brideshead Revisited*:

But as I drove away and turned back in the car to take  
what promised to be my last view of the house, I felt  
that I was leaving part of myself behind, and that  
wherever I went afterwards I should feel the lack of it,  
and search for it hopelessly, as ghosts are said to do,  
frequenting the spots where they buried material  
treasures without which they cannot pay their way to  
the nether world. (157-58)

Travelling plays an important part as a definition of change in D. H. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl* (1920) as well. Alvina leaves England to accompany her new lover Ciccio to Naples. The initial train ride from London captures verbally the sense of leaving something behind:

And so the big, heavy train drew out, leaving the others small and dim on the platform. It was foggy, the river was a sea of yellow beneath the ponderous iron bridge. The morning was dim and dank. (293)

The separation between past and future takes a more dramatic turn when they board the ship that will take them over the channel. Lawrence uses clear contrasts to create this transition from one space (and time) to another. First, Alvina and Ciccio are standing looking in the direction they are travelling:

The sea was very still. The sun was fairly high in the open sky, where white cloud-tops showed against the pale, wintry blue. Across the sea came a silver sun-track. And Alvina and Ciccio looking at the sun, which stood a little to the right of the ship's course. (293)

The future, or the idea of the future for Alvina, is bright and beautiful, almost, as we will see later, utopian. What she is leaving behind is less attractive:

So they turned to walk to the stern of the boat. And Alvina's heart suddenly contracted. She caught Ciccio's arm, as the boat rolled gently. For there behind, behind all the sunshine, was England. England, beyond the water, rising with ash-grey, corpse-grey cliffs, and streaks of snow on the downs above. England, like a long, ash-grey coffin slowly submerging. She watched

it, fascinated and terrified. It seemed to repudiate the sunshine, to remain unilluminated, long and ash-grey and dead, with streaks of snow like cerements. That was England! Her thoughts flew to Woodhouse, the grey centre of it all. Home! (294)

This is an example of hypothetical nostalgia (see chapter two), *apodemialgia*, a longing away from home. Like ordinary nostalgia, it is situated in a dissatisfaction in the present and a longing somewhere else, just that this somewhere is not *home* but *away*. The *away* for Alvina will be externally a world that will represent old classic rural values, but internally, in line with Lawrence's interests, something new, the exotic, erotic, free, that can be found in nature rather than in culture. In this sense, as a contrast to the "ash-grey, corpse-grey cliffs," this voyage is nothing else than a utopian dream, an ambition and desire to enter an idealized space. Alvina realizes this herself:

For the first time the nostalgia of the vast Roman and classic world took possession of her [...] it was to escape from the smallish perfection of England, into the grander imperfection of a great continent. (297)

The notion of approaching a natural human state, symbolized by the beauty and freshness of the landscape, is also experienced subconsciously by Alvina in the way she seems to be aware of this natural state in herself:

When morning came, and the bleary people pulled the curtains, it was a clear dawn, and they were in the south of France. There was no sign of snow. The landscape was half southern, half Alpine. White houses with brownish tiles stood among almond trees and cactus. It was beautiful, and Alvina felt she had known

it all before, in a happier life. The morning was graceful almost as spring. (297)

The final fanfare occurs at next day's sunset, where "she saw the golden dawn, a golden sun coming out of level country" (299).

Voyages, then, function both as an escape from the present and a longing for something as well as a metaphor of the passage of time, changes, and memories.

### **Anti-Modernity**

Nostalgia, as in the case of Alvina above, is really nostalgia for the natural state of existence, much the same as the Romantic's urge for the rural and idealized ancient times. Nostalgia's objection to modernity and the use of animatedly contrasting images to influence the reader to join the narrative's lust for nature (past times) is often explicit in Lawrence's works. The strategy of juxtaposing the natural and the cultural is evident in *The Rainbow* (1915) in a series of montages in section two of chapter one. Lawrence moves between the idyllic, pastoral, natural landscape and the effects of the industrialization and civilization in a way that creates a strong impression of anti-modernity and longing back to a natural state. It is not only the montage itself that is effective, **but** also the choice of words in describing the narrator's different attitudes to the past and present. Civilization is represented by "red, crude houses plastered on the valley in masses [...]" (14) and "the dim smoking hill of the town" (14) whereas nature intrudes through its "bushes of lilac and guelder-rose and privet [...]" (14). The "sulphurous smell of pit-refuse burning" (14) is contrasted with the "daffodils [...] thick in green and yellow" (14).

Lawrence's juxtaposing style is carried on in the famous scene with the mare and the locomotive in *Women in Love* (1920), where Lawrence effectively creates this image of now and then, or rather now and there, since this "then" is in its utopian, natural way, rather spatial than temporal:

But he sat glistening and obstinate, forcing the wheeling mare, which spun and swerved like a wind, and yet could not get out of the grasp of his will, nor escape from the mad clamour of terror that resounded through her, as the trucks thumped slowly, heavily, horrifying, one after the other, one pursuing the other, over the rails of the crossing.

The locomotive, as if wanting to see what could be done, put on the brakes, and back came the trucks rebounding on the iron buffers, striking like horrible cymbals, clashing nearer and nearer in frightful strident concussions. The mare opened her mouth and rose slowly, as if lifted up on a wind of terror. (133)

The horse, representing the natural, is also associated with such words as "wind" (twice) and verbs that echo natural events, "spun and swerved" and "rose," while the train as a cultural and modern phenomena, is described with forceful alliterations and words that are identified with the modern: "striking," "cymbals," "clashing," and "concussions." The contrasting image is potent and convincing enough for the reader to feel the repulsion of the modern. The deterministic quality of modernity, its repetitions and conformity, is situated in the trucks that come "one after the other."

### **The Universal Grief**

"Nostalgia is inevitably tied to a personal teleological idea that the progress of our lives must end in death; an entropy," I wrote in the end of chapter two,



describing how the mood of nostalgia is tied to the notion of how short, and ultimately meaningless, our lives are. The nostalgic strains against modernity and progress may very well be an indication of the way nostalgia's project of halting time originates in this universal grief. Nostalgic imagery that evokes this sense of meaninglessness or death, and at the same time celebrates life, is not uncommon. Often there is resonance of the astronomical images or temporal indicators that contrasts our personal death with how life goes on without us. Yvonne, in *Under the Volcano*, has such a revelation:

And the earth itself still turning on its axis and revolving around that sun, the sun revolving around the luminous wheel of this galaxy, the countless unmeasured jeweled wheels of countless unmeasured galaxies turning, turning, majestically, into infinity, into eternity, through all of which all life ran on – all this, long after she herself was dead, men would still be reading in the night sky, and as the earth turned through those distant seasons, and they watched the constellations still rising, culminating, setting, to rise again [...] (323)

The concept of individual annihilation is greatly contrasted with life, the universe, and the ever changing cycle of life. Within the cyclic motifs, this concept of personal death becomes a radical contrast. At first glance, Yvonne's real death might not seem to communicate this idea since it is almost celebratory:

And leaving the burning dream Yvonne felt herself suddenly gathered upwards and borne towards the stars, through eddies of stars scattering aloft with ever wider circlings like rings on water, among which now

appeared, like a flock of diamond birds flying softly  
and steadily towards Orion, the Pleiades... (337)

This passage is highly nostalgic. First, of course, because of the way the paragraph embraces many of the images of nostalgia: references to the astronomic and mythological, the idea of time passing, and the sense of idealization. More so, death here, as envisioned by Yvonne (or Lowry) as something peaceful, is a return to the origins of the world. This sentiment does echo Freud's ideas about the death wish as some suspect longing for a natural state, or becoming once again part of the zodiac of the universe. The word "envision" is crucial since we have to separate Yvonne's factual death from her emotions about her own. Real death, of course, is what we experience through the consul:

Suddenly he screamed, and it was as though this  
scream were being tossed from one tree to another, as  
its echoes returned, then, as though the trees  
themselves were crowding nearer, huddled together,  
closing over him...

Somebody threw a dead dog after him down the  
ravine. (376)

As the protagonists in *The Waves* grow older and become more concerned with the fading of life, the narrative tends to expose more and more images of universal grief. Close to the end Bernard likens life to a dream, a common metaphor for the denial of the realities of life, which he brilliantly formulates in the next sentence: "Our flame, the will-o'-the-wisp that dances in a few eyes, is soon to be blown out and all will fade" (155). If Bernard's horror against time seems utterly personal, Louis's cry against the inexorable passage of time anticipates the end of everything:

‘But listen,” said Louis, ‘to the world moving through abysses of infinite space. It roars; the lighted strip of history is past and our kings and queens; we are gone; our civilization; the Nile; and all life. Our separate drops are dissolved; we are extinct, lost in the abysses of time, in the darkness.’ (127)

The separate drops that dissolve isolated through the unusual use of the semicolon, is a brilliant image of our brief history in the universe before its end.

### **Childhood**

Nostalgia evoked through the use of childhood is generally achieved by addressing the world of childhood as an alternative to the present. This is done either through the use of an idealized space or time, by reinforcing its past character, or by using common symbols or representations of childhood that force the reader into the sensations of his own past childhood. A third alternative, that of engaging the reader in a childhood consciousness, we have encountered in chapter four.

We can observe how the notion of an idealized childhood is conveyed through the enhanced, imaginative places and narration of the children’s books of the first half of the 1900s, something Fay Sampson acknowledges in “Childhood and Twentieth-Century Children’s Literature” (2000). Literary childhood is always a memory, always constructed, and perhaps idealized. Childhood itself is an idealized space, reflected upon with nostalgia that affects the narration and the style of the prose. Sampson primarily studies the way another type of rhapsodized places exists *within* these already highly

idealized settings, such as Peter Pan's Never-Never Land, the Secret Garden in the novel of the same name, or the top of the forest in the Pooh stories (62).

Sometimes childhood seems to be an excuse for a resistance to progress and modernity. "*Wind in the Willows*," writes Sampson, "is not really a children's book, but a middle class adult's nostalgia for a rural idyll, a flight from the industrial and proletarian present" (62). The concept of idealized childhood seems, thus, closely related to that of the entropic time in which childhood is the golden age that is bound to be destroyed by time. The impossibility for these spaces to exist in real life, or the impossibility of a return to childhood, is cleverly communicated through the name of this space in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1911), "Never Never Land." The first line in *Peter Pan*, "All children, except one, grow up" (9) confirms this where the "one" is an imaginary hope, a nostalgic force against progress – a hope in vain since the reality is so firmly described by the simplicity of "grow up." The nostalgic entropy is further enforced on the first page when Mrs. Darling exclaims why the children cannot remain the same forever and through Wendy's introspective thought "Two is the beginning of the end" (9). The sadness of lost childhood, as represented by Neverland, is forcefully explained by the narrator: "On these magic shores children at play are for ever beaching their coracles. We too have been there; we can still hear the sound of the surf, though we shall land no more" (14). The idealized Neverland is not only rosy in its description of childhood, but also in the typical manner its gaming qualities of "savages and lonely lairs" (13) are contrasted with "chocolate-pudding day" and "three-pence for pulling out your tooth yourself [...]" (14). For the adult these childhood memories, although not that attractive at the time, is now part of the idealization of childhood.

In *Under the Volcano* we confront our childhood, together with the protagonist, through an image used as a symbol for childhood: The Ferris wheel. The Ferris wheel as a traditional symbol tends to illustrate, based on its circular shape and its movement, the human heart, the circle of life with its ups and downs. A Ferris wheel is something that we associate mainly with childhood or a childhood experience of awe and fascination. It is not only the actual image of the Ferris wheel that comes to mind, but also other senses associated with it such as the blinking lights, the noise of the people in it, and perhaps a melody being played. In a wider sense it has become the main staple of the amusement park with all those associations. It carries both the fascination for our own past childhood and the magic we have lost with it.

In *Under the Volcano* we first encounter the Ferris wheel through the focalization of M. Laurelle:

[...] the slowly revolving Ferris wheel, already lit up, in the square of Quauhnahuac; he thought he could distinguish the sound of human laughter rising from its bright gondolas and, again, that faint intoxication of voices singing, diminishing, dying in the wind, inaudible finally. (16)

It is important to note how crucial the sounds are in this image, and it is basically the sounds of the dying voices that represent, or enhance, the sense of lost childhood. In the end of chapter one, commencing the long analepsis which will be the body of the text, the Ferris wheel becomes the emblem of recreating the past through its reversed motion: "Over the town, in the dark tempestuous night, backwards revolved the luminous wheel" (47).

For the consul the Ferris wheel will more explicitly come to represent that lost childhood through his comparison of it to that of “an enormously magnified child’s structure of girders and angle brackets, nuts and bolts, in Meccano [...]” (221).

Somewhat later he experiences something of a moment of truth when he enters, what he refers to as “a little confession box” (225) in the “huge looping-the-loop machine [...]” (224). There seems to be a kind of desperation, not only to clear the mind of his spinning associations but also to regain possession of his own past, a project doomed to fail in this “monster” (225). But the encounter with the fair and all its air of nostalgia definitely charges him with revelations of the essence of nostalgia. The merriment of the first stage of nostalgia suddenly alters into the later tragic sense of having lost something; a process that simulates that of the nostalgic experience:

At the same time, as though a cloud had come over the sun, the aspect of the fair had completely altered for him. The merry grinding of the roller skates, the cheerful if ironic music, the cries of the little children on their goose-necked steeds, the procession of queer pictures – all this had suddenly become transcendently awful and tragic, distant, transmuted, as it were some final impression on the senses of what the earth was like, carried over into an obscure region of death, a gathering thunder of immediable sorrow [...] (218)

The tragic aspect of nostalgia and the stages of the nostalgic reaction are forcefully transported into the reader through the brilliant metaphor of the cloud obscuring the sun, and this creates a strong sensual experience connected to that of the “goose-necked steeds” later. It is a scene that carries

both the remembrance and its representation through the enumeration of what the fair actually displays. The melancholia, or in this case the tragedy, arise out of the awareness of this lostness.

The idea of using childhood imagery in order to both create possibilities for reader associations into nostalgic domains, as well as creating a situation for a protagonist where he can confront his own nostalgia is fairly common. We remember the significant scene in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* when Holden experiences a sudden happiness watching his little sister Phoebe on the carousel. He himself does not understand why, but the whole image of the carousel, always playing the same songs, reminds him of his own childhood. Although he is not aware of it yet, this step of looking back to his own childhood with a subconscious desire is actually the first step to adulthood where this happiness will also be infused with the tragic element of nostalgia.

Since the allusion to childhood is effective in evoking nostalgia, it is not accidental that Woolf in her highly nostalgic novel *To the Lighthouse* chooses to address the world and wonder of childhood through James Ramsay in order to firmly establish the nostalgic tone of her book. The book opens with a series of sensations – “The wheel-barrow, the lawn-mower, the sound of poplar trees, leaves whitening before rain, rooks cawing, brooms knocking, dresses rustling [...]” (5) – that together with Woolf's rhythmic style put the reader right into the wonder of sensations of childhood.

## Youth

The contexts of childhood not only carry nostalgic possibilities but also the general appreciation of youth as a stage of physical perfection and opportunities. Nostalgia is evoked when youthfulness is contrasted with

indications of aging and human decay, either explicitly through the narrative or implicitly through the private awareness of this decay.

Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* is a book that predominantly uses the idea of youth as a nostalgia for its main characters. Dick Diver's fascination for Nicole is primarily her air of youth: "She smiled, a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world" (28). Later, when the younger Rosemary has taken on Nicole's role, Nicole meditates on her own aging:

She bathed and anointed herself and covered her body with a layer of powder, while her toes crunched another pile on a bath towel. She looked microscopically at the lines of her flanks, wondering how soon the fine, slim edifice would begin to sink squat and earthward. [...] The only physical disparity between Nicole at present and Nicole of five years before was simply that she was no longer a young girl. (362)

At the same time Dick remembers "that once he could stand on his hands on a chair at the end of a board [...]" (352) and his romance with Rosemary is basically a longing back for his lost youth through her "innocent" kisses (145). This echoes his remembrance of the early kisses with Nicole when "nothing had ever felt so young as her lips [...]" (53). The structure of the novel becomes a celebration of youth that changes into a loss of youth, a progress intensified by the imagery of the book and how the characters are scourged by the idea of youth.<sup>43</sup> Youth not only equals strength, but also female beauty, and the loss of youth is clearly signified by how the characters experience this loss of beauty. Nicole's years slip "away by clock and calendar and birthday, with the added poignance of her perishable beauty"

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<sup>43</sup> This refers to the structure of the 1951 edition.



(228). In reality, the human body equals that of any other fabric and will inevitably become a ruin.

In Fitzgerald's short story "One Trip Abroad" (1930) we meet a similar celebration of youth through the aging Kellys. In the beginning of the story the Kellys are in their twenties and they are a "handsome couple; the man rather intense and sensitive, the girl arrestingly light of hue in eyes and hair, her face without shadows, its living freshness modulated by a lovely confident calm" (578). The air of youth is not only communicated through descriptions of their physical assets, but also through the way they seem to experience the world in a young and naïve perspective:

They dined on the hotel veranda under a sky that was low and full of the presence of a strange and watchful God; around the corners of the hotel the night already stirred with the sounds of which they had so often read but that were even so hysterically unfamiliar—drums from Senegal, a native flute, the selfish, effeminate whine of a camel, the Arabs pattering past in shoes made of old automobile tires, the wail of a Magian prayer. (579)

They are not only tourists in Africa but tourists in the world: young, innocent, naïve, curious, and attentive. We can compare this youthful description of the world around them to their visit to Switzerland four years later:

[...] they arrived one spring day at the lake that is the center of Europe—a placid, smiling spot with pastoral hillsides, a backdrop of mountains and waters of postcard blue, waters that are a little sinister beneath the surface with all the misery that has dragged itself here from every corner of Europe. [...] the Lake Geneva

that Nelson and Nicole came to was the dreary one of sanatoriums and rest hotels. (594)

It is not only the way they look at the lake that betrays a view from another age that is restless, penetrating, and “postcard blue,” but also how the image of “sanatoriums and rest hotels” clearly indicates where life is heading. The end shows a clear introspection when they both envision a glimpse of the world experienced through youth when “the music and the far-away lights were like hope, like the enchanted distance from which children see things” (596), and Nicole whispers to Nelson: “We can have it all again [...]” (596). This flicker of hope turns suddenly into a nightmare when they turn towards their doppelgänger couple and realize that they are, in fact, the woman whose “cheeks were wan” with “little pouches of ill health under the eyes [...]” (595) and the man whose face was “so weak and self-indulgent that it’s almost mean—the kind of face that needs half a dozen drinks really to open the eyes and stiffen the mouth up to normal” (596).

The arresting image of youth, and the world through youth, makes identification between the reader’s own youth and the fictive youth possible. The descriptions of youth, especially in Fitzgerald’s works, tend toward an idealization of youth, as in the description of young Judy Jones in “Winter Dreams” (1922):

She was arrestingly beautiful. The color in her cheeks was centered like the color in a picture—it was not a “high” color, but a sort of fluctuating and feverish warmth, so shaded that it seemed at any moment it would recede and disappear. This color and the mobility of her mouth gave a continual impression of flux, of intense life, of passionate vitality—balanced only partially by the sad luxury of her eyes. (49)

It is not only the beauty in Judy Jones, but more so the celebration of her youthfulness in the use of words associated with main characteristics of youth such as “flux,” “intense life,” and “passionate vitality.” Not only does Judy Jones embrace the ideal of youth in her physical appearance, but also in her activities. She is later spotted by Dexter as she is driving a racing motor boat, a potent image of “white streamers of cleft water [that] rolled themselves out behind it” before it “was sweeping in an immense and purposeless circle of spray round and round in the middle of the lake” (50). Judy Jones then, after acquainting herself with Dexter, jumps into the water swimming “with a sinuous crawl” where her arms “burned to butternut, moved sinuously among the dull platinum ripples, elbow appearing first, casting the forearm back with a cadence of falling water, then reaching out and down, stabbing a path ahead” (51). The detail of the crawl, an almost microscopic study of her decisive “stabbing,” creates the impression of watching her in slow-motion. No wonder Dexter has something of a nervous breakdown in the end when he realizes that Judy Jones is no longer representing the potent beauty of his youth, for when he is describing her he is, in fact, describing his own youth:

The dream was gone. Something had been taken from him. In a sort of panic he pushed the palms of his hands into his eyes and tried to bring up a picture of the waters lapping on Sherry Island and the moonlit verandah, and gingham on the golf links and the dry sun and the gold color of her neck’s soft down. And her mouth damp to his kisses and her eyes plaintive with melancholy and her freshness like new fine linen in the morning. Why, these things were no longer in the world! They had existed and they existed no longer.(65)

Dexter's realization of time's absolute progress forward necessitates a creation of nostalgic episodes that come to represent his own youth. These images are tied together with repeated "and" in order to emphasize the breathtaking character they possess.

### **Dystopian Spaces**

The idea of the utopian novel is a nostalgic one, since it ultimately describes an idealized place, society, or dream that springboards from the bleak reality of a present setting. Although utopian worlds are not necessarily "lost" worlds, they inhabit the essence of ontological nostalgia, where the nostalgia is not temporally in the past, but only envisioned as an idealized favoured alternative to the present. The nostalgic dichotomy was present already in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) where the present unjust England is illustrated in book one and then contrasted with the country Utopia in book two. Due to an increased criticism of the idea of utopias in the early twentieth century these kind of narratives disappeared mostly after H. G. Wells' science fiction books. The idea of an idealized space remained though as we have seen in examples above from Lawrence and Lowry.

The appearance of the utopian critic coincided with the emergence of a more favoured genre, dystopia, where the utopian idea is reversed. One factor behind the popularization of dystopia was the general critique of modernity and progress that prevailed in the early 1900s. At first glance, dystopias like Karin Boye's *Kallocain* (1940), George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), or Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1951) might seem the opposite of nostalgia since it is the future world (the present narrative world in the dystopia) that appears inhuman, unfair, and decadent. The celebration of the

old world is obvious in a work such as *Fahrenheit 451* where the general symbol of the written word comes to represent what we have lost forever. These dystopian novels become nostalgic in the way they express the sense of something lost. They remind us of the romantic's longing for the old village, the agrarian past, the simplicity of life, and the natural. In these examples, nostalgia is actualized through the way the future of the dystopian worlds is narrated in order to be experienced as a present world. From this "present" world/time grows a longing for the past. We could call this past *dystopian utopia*.

One novel that is aware of the paradox of the dystopian utopia is Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), where the usually crystal clear definition of good and bad is muddled. At first it seems like the title bears an ironic touch. The brave new world is, indeed, a classic horrible dystopian world and not at all brave. However, the longing back for an old world is not uncomplicated as in *Fahrenheit 451*. Its representation through the Reservations, although controlled by the future ruling classes, does not seem like much to miss or long for. Who would like to exchange free sex, no commitments, good health, drugs without side effects, *for* boys being whipped, sweaty drunks, incomprehensible dances and drumming, painful deaths? On the other hand, who wants to live in a fascist brainwashed and emotionless classed society, where there is no music, art, literature, families, or real love? In not idealizing either world, Huxley completely voids himself from any nostalgic content and focuses instead on the restlessness of man. It is a good example of how nostalgia is *not* evoked automatically through the

use of different binary spaces. The irony and the argumentative tone in *Brave New World* prevent this.

### Conclusion

Santesso writes in the end of *A Careful Longing* that these “tropes and images that made up eighteenth-century nostalgic poetry—ruins, bards, decayed small towns or villages, childhood games—remained popular [...]” (185). We have seen how these tropes and imagery have endured all the way into modern fiction, sometimes transformed and changed, but containing the same basic essentials of nostalgia. The ways of describing the essence of nostalgia, and thus opening up possibilities for nostalgic experiences in an audience, owe much to these early attempts. We have also observed that there are a few basic essentials that prove the basis for these tropes and images: the dichotomy of nostalgia (now and then, here and there, present and past), the entropic time arrow, and its consequences on existential matters, the idea of decay and time passing, and finally idealizations of spaces such as childhood, the simplicity of the pastoral, the rural, and the mythic.

This chapter, though, has not only been a survey of possible nostalgic identifications through tropes and imagery but also an exercise in how we can apply our methodology to a variety of texts. Hopefully we have reached an understanding of the structure of our method and the ways we can explore possible nostalgic evocations in other readers through *one* private experience with the aid of re-experiencing texts with a competent reader.



## Chapter Six

### Nostalgic Narratives

In the section called “The Analeptic Structure” we will explore how the play with narrative order, as well as its mood and voice, create a nostalgic narrative. The theory of the analeptic structure will then be concluded with an analysis of Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited*. There is also another kind of retrospection that instead of retrieving new story events, forces us back to familiar ones, but with a new dimension added. This can not only be repeating, or completing, internal analepses, but also less obvious narrative mechanisms that encourage us to revalue our past narrative experience, mechanisms which are not incorporated in Genette’s vocabulary. The deliberate use of the past narration in order to create a specific effect in the present narration is what I call use of our *textual memory*. In the section “Textual Memory” we will explore how a text can play with our textual memory in order to affect us nostalgically and these theories will then come into practice during our analysis of the use of textual memory in Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*.

#### **The Analeptic Structure**

The *analeptic structure* suggests a frame structure where a narrator subsequently narrates the events of some past imagination or experience, thus creating a distinct “now” and “then” on which he is liable to comment. The use of first person narration further stimulates the private nature of the recollection and aids the seductive qualities of the narration; it grants the



narrator a greater freedom in rearranging the temporal order of events. By carefully choosing and/or altering the narrator's *voice* and *mood*, as we saw in chapter four, it is possible for the author to alternate between a distant and a more direct narration in order to control the nostalgic reading experience.

The analeptic structure is by far the most common narrative technique used to evoke nostalgia in literature and was firmly identified by Genette in "Discours du récit" (1972), as he explored the narrative techniques used in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Genette uses the term "analeptic" in order to define a narrative that fundamentally uses "a vast movement of coming-and-going from one key, strategically dominant position [...]" (45). The "going from" this one key leads back into story time and represents thus analepses – a retrospective movement which we call analeptic. Just like Genette states, the dominant position "serves as a springboard for a new memory-elicited analepsis [...]" (44). Genette uses the following scheme in order to analyze the macro narrative structure of the first part of the *Recherche*:

A5B2C5D5E2F5G1H5I4J3...<sup>44</sup>

The letters are the chronological order of the narrative, and the numbers show the chronological order of the story. Thus, the dominant position is 5 which occurs no less than five times and constitutes a late, but difficult to date, episode of the hero's life when he suffers from insomnia and enters into remembrance of his early life. These remembrances are then activated through the numerous analepses back in time. Since 5 is the dominant

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<sup>44</sup> Genette uses a more complicated scheme in order to show the difference between open and closed analepses, but for our purpose it is more convenient to simplify it.

position we should call this the *first narrative* from which all anachronies are valued.

Although the scheme of the narrative order in *Recherche* above is a description of the narrative structure of the first volume, it follows a more conventional progression after J3: “henceforth the movement is established, and the narrative, in its major articulations, for the most part becomes regular and conforms to chronological order [...]” (45). In this sense it differs slightly from the more traditional analeptic structure where we would have expected to return to 5 more frequently, and especially in the very end. As we can see, the main body of story events is *not* the first dominant narrative but instead the analeptic story. Therefore, in order not to confuse the first narrative, which is the one that occupies least narrative space, with the main narrative, which is the past retold from the first narrative (second narrative), let us define the latter as *the analeptic narrative*.

The analepses in the *Recherche* are predominantly of the external kind since they stretch back before the first narrative. The analepses that come from the first narrative, and thus do not interfere with the other analepses in the analeptic narrative, and at the same time spring out from the same narrator, are called *homodiegetic analepses* (Genette 51). These types of analepses are exceptionally bound to carry nostalgic force since they are part of the intimacy of the extradiegetic narrator as well as reach back in story time without leaving the world of the first narrative. The *homodiegetic analepses* remind us of something “past” while not confusing us about the place and time we are transported to in the narrative. As Gautam Kundu has noted, the homodiegetic aspect of the analepses evokes “a mood of wistfulness and nostalgia [...]” through its bridging qualities (67). Certainly there are analepses in the *Recherche* of the second kind, *heterodiegetic*, in which

another character than Marcel retells stories that are perhaps not part of Marcel's world or knowledge. These are analepses within analepses, and although they create a retrograde movement that suggest past times, they are less prone to be nostalgic.

### **Revisiting *Brideshead Revisited***

The actual temporal and spatial springboard of the first narrative in Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* is not as obvious as Marcel's sleepless nights. The frame story from which we inherit the past is 1944 during the midst of the Second World War. Captain Charles Ryder, the protagonist and the narrator of the novel, comes upon the Brideshead Estate, a place known to him from the past, and this triggers a series of memories in a first person analeptic narration. The analepses take us back to a period between Charles' experiences at Oxford University in 1923 until the death of the father of his long time friend Sebastian in Brideshead at the eve of World War Two. As a true frame story, it concludes again in the last visit to Brideshead in 1944. The frame story is further distinguished through its initial and ending position within a prologue and epilogue. Although there is no suspicion, as in the *Recherche*, that the narration is not coming from the time of the frame story, the first narrative itself disappears during the course of the narrative unlike in the *Recherche*. This means that we never return, physically, to the actual first narrative until the end, although the subsequent voice constantly interferes with the analeptic narrative. Charles' narrative voice will constantly return and evaluate, comment, and colour the analepses which means that we are constantly going to and from the first narrative's temporality. Therefore, there seems to be no physical way that Charles is telling the memories from the war situation since there is no obvious narratee

as in the case of Marlow's listening crowd in *Heart of Darkness*, nor a specific context of narrative production such as Marcel's writing in the end of the *Recherche*.

The analeptic narrative is triggered by conversation in the prologue:

'There's a frightful great fountain, too, in front of the steps, all rocks and sort of carved animals. You never saw such a thing.'

'Yes, Hooper, I did. I've been here before.'

The words seemed to ring back to me enriched from the vaults of my dungeon. (14)

Charles' memories are like Marcel's in the way that these memories have been hidden deep and, in this very moment, involuntarily expose themselves to Charles. The mysterious air of them is accentuated by his dry reply to Hooper's fascination about the place. The selective and romantic side of the memory is set at the very beginning of chapter one:

'I have been here before,' I said. I had been there before; first with Sebastian more than twenty years ago on a cloudless day in June, when the ditches were creamy with meadowsweet and the air heavy with all the scents of summer; it was a day of peculiar splendour, and though I had been there so often, in so many moods, it was to that first visit that my heart returned on this, my latest. (17)

Naturally, in order to evoke the nostalgia of this first analepsis, the narrator places it in "a cloudless day in June" with a roar of the scents and visual aspects of summer. The grief of the present narrative position, with the war as a masterful symbol of a present in decay, is emphasized when we know that this is also the last visit to Brideshead.

What follows then is a chronological exposé of the times between 1923 and 1939 with extended use of subsequent narrative discourse. The narrating either adds nostalgic mood and voice to its scenery in order to create a nostalgic presence or creates a longing for the early analepses as well as commenting about the lostness and fleeting qualities of the past. Thus we cannot develop a scheme that would show where we return to the first narrative, since this first narrative, in a way, always is conscious. However, we can create a simple macro-scheme that outlines the events. It would look like this:

**PROLOGUE:** *Brideshead Revisited*

A30 Brideshead, 1944.

**PART 1:** *Et in Arcadia Ego*

B4 First visit to Brideshead, June 1923.

C2 First meeting with Sebastian, March 1923.

D1 First glance at Sebastian with his teddy-bear.

E2

F3 First Lunch with Sebastian, March 1923.

G4

H5 Last visit from cousin Jasper, end of Summer 1923.

I6 Drinks with Anthony Blanche, day after visit from cousin, end of Summer 1923.

J7 Last morning of term 1923.

K8 Holiday at father's in London, 1924.

L9 Brideshead, August 1924.

M10 Venice at Sebastian's father, 1924.

N11 New term at Oxford, August 1924.

O12 Julia's party in London 1924.

P13 Brideshead, Christmas 1924.

Q14 Oxford, early 1925.

R15 Brideshead, Easter 1925.

S16 Oxford summer term. Sebastian gets expelled, 1925.

**PART 2:** *Brideshead Deserted*

- T17 Brideshead, Christmas 1925.
- U18 Paris, 1926.
- V4 Julia at Brideshead (recollection).
- X19 General Strike, London spring 1926.
- Y20 Casablanca, finding Sebastian, 1926.
- Z21 London, early June 1926.
- PART 3:** *A Twitch upon the Thread*
- AA23 New York, 1939.<sup>45</sup>
- AB22 Travelling in South America and painting, 1929-1939.
- AC24 Meeting his wife in New York, 1939.
- AD25 Crossing the Atlantic, Storm, meeting Julia, 1939.
- AE26 The Exhibition, 1939.
- AF27 With Julia at Brideshead, Summer.  
Remembering their past years.
- AG28 Divorces and Weddings (Ryder hears from  
Superior of Sebastian's fate).
- AH29 Brideshead, Lord Marchmain dies.
- EPILOGUE:** *Brideshead Revisited*
- AI30 Brideshead 1944.

This scheme reflects the general structure of the text with minor analepses omitted as well as heterodiegetic analepses told by characters other than the protagonist in the analeptic narrative. Two examples of the latter occur during the Atlantic crossing in AD25 when Julia tells Charles about her life with Rex and during AG28 when the Superior tells Charles about the fate of Sebastian. Even if they are told by other narrators they should not be considered intradiegetic since their voices are unquestionably that of the narrator of the first narrative, and thus extradiegetic as well. We are still talking about an internally focalized mood from the extradiegetic narrator. In the case of Julia's remembrance, the focalization is not changed due to the use of a peculiar use of reported speech. Julia's memories are introduced in a

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<sup>45</sup> Since we run out of alphabetic letters, AA means chronologically a time later than Z.

short, direct speech: “‘Rex has never been unkind to me intentionally,’ she said” (240). It is followed by a short conversation in direct speech but then “[t]en hours of talking” (239) is retold by the narrator in a reported speech that has an almost dreamy and fragmentary character:

Waking and dreaming, through the strain and creak  
and heave of the long night, firm on my back with my  
arms and legs spread wide to check the roll, and my  
eyes open to the darkness, I lay thinking of Julia.

‘... We thought papa might come back to England  
after mummy died, or that he might marry again, but  
he lives just as he did. Rex and I often go to see him  
now. I’ve grown fond of him....Sebastian’s disappeared  
completely ... Cordelia’s in Spain with an ambulance...  
[...] (241)

Later, the Superior’s story about Sebastian is similar in the way that the narrator takes over a direct speech. It starts out with ordinary dialogue, but soon the direct speech loses the voice of the Superior and turns into large segments of dialogue that remarkably end without the end quotation mark, as if they have changed from direct speech to reported speech during the course of the speech.

I have spent considerable time with these two occurrences since it is important to emphasize that in the analeptic structure we must *not* leave the narrative mood and voice of the dominant first narrative. Furthermore, the subsequent narrator who remembers from that first narrative *has* to control the whole narrating otherwise we lose the effect of subsequent narration and the intimacy of one narrator.

If we return to the analeptic narrative we see that in most instances it is chronological, and importantly so, because it is in the chronology of

memory we will see the change of selected past growing into the dismays of time passing. If we would have omitted the frame story, the extent to which we would have experienced this narrative nostalgically would have been limited. Even with the frame story as a present and the long first analeptic narrative as an uninterrupted past without any interference from the frame position, the juxtaposition between past and present and the evaluation of the past would have been inessential. This is *not* the case with *Brideshead Revisited* since the narrative mood and voice constantly return to the dominant mode of the frame story in between the analepses. For example, between F3 and G4 we read the following: "That day was the beginning of my friendship with Sebastian, and thus it came about, that morning in June, that I was lying beside him in the shade of the high elms watching the smoke from his lips drift up into the branches" (29). Although we are not physically back to the time of narration, which is Brideshead in 1944, in a way like "When I saw the demolished walls of the house I remembered..." the narrative tone still is distinctly back into the time of narrating. First, it breaks with the constant direct speeches that give the analepsis before a directness, but also, in Genette's term, a *distance* to the narrating. More so, it has a proleptic quality as a reminder of the time of narration and an evaluation of the time of the analepsis, hence it is an internal prolepsis.<sup>46</sup> When Charles states that it "was the beginning of my friendship with Sebastian," he undoubtedly does so from a later time when he understands that this was the start of their friendship. Another retreat to the time of narration, and a more obvious one, is between G4 and H5: "That is the full account of my first brief visit to Brideshead; could I have known then that it would one day be

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<sup>46</sup> In a strict sense we are talking about an internal prolepsis, but as it occurs in the analeptic narrative, where the time of narrating is clear, it could as well be interpreted as part of the analepses from the first narrative.



remembered with tears by a middle-aged captain of infantry?" (34). Here we are not only placed definitely back to the frame story but the narrator also comments about the nostalgia in the analepsis through his own reaction. At some instances the presence of the narrator's temporal position is inserted in the middle of an analepsis, for example in the middle of E2: "[...] he [cousin Jasper] covered most subjects; even today I could repeat much of what he said, word for word" (21) or in H5: "Looking back, now, after twenty years, there is little I would have left undone or done otherwise" (39). At key points the narrator's comments are more explicit about passing time, youth, and nostalgia. This is evidenced in the beginning of chapter four in part one:

The languor of Youth – how unique and quintessential it is! How quickly, how irrecoverably, lost! The zest, the generous affections, the illusions, the despair, all the traditional attributes of Youth – all save this – come and go with us through life. These things are a part of life itself; but languor – the relaxation of yet unwearied sinews, the mind sequestered and self-regarding – that belongs to Youth alone and dies with it. Perhaps in the mansions of Limbo the heroes enjoy some such compensation for their loss of the Beatific Vision; perhaps the Beatific Vision itself has some remote kinship with this lowly experience; I, at any rate, believed myself very near heaven, during those languid days at Brideshead. (71)

The heaven of youth, or more specifically, the narrator's subsequent appreciation of his youth, is then in nostalgic fashion narrated with such a tone that it enhances its selected nature, all in conjuncture with the romantic idioms for nostalgia. No wonder the early analepses take place on a "cloudless day in June [...]" (17), "untroubled by any wind [...]" and with "sweet summer scents [...]" and "fumes of the sweet, golden wine [...]" (20)

where they all “ate the strawberries and drank the wine [...]” (19).

### Summary

Conclusively, the analeptic structure needs a frame story, a dominant point of narration which we call the first narrative, from which a subsequent narration of usually chronological past events (analeptic narrative) commences through multiple nostalgic homodiegetic external analepses. The first person narrator, an extradiegetic homodiegetic narrator, then constantly infuses the past with his present position through either his comments and his narrating style or a direct return to the dominant first narrative. This gives us the following hypothetical scheme over a standard analeptic structure:

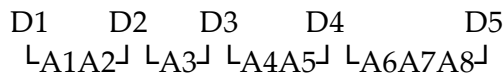


Fig. 9. The Analeptic Structure.

Similar to how the narrating functions in *The Great Gatsby*, as we saw in chapter four, it is typical for the analeptic narration that the narrator himself is not the most central character in the narration, but rather a first person distant observer of details and emotions in the world surrounding him. This creates both a strong presence in the way he can describe the atmosphere around him, using the romantic connotations of nostalgia, and a temporal distance to the plot events since he is an observer. The interplay between narrative distance and presence stimulates the dichotomy of the nostalgic experience, as was the case with Nick in *The Great Gatsby*.

The nostalgia within the analeptic structure is much concerned with

story; it is the past in the story that is evoked and coloured nostalgically by the narrator. However, there is also a possibility to create nostalgia *within* the narrative by playing with our textual narrative memory.

## Textual Memory

### The Use of Textual Memory

A closer look at *Brideshead Revisited* shows that the “heaven of Youth” in the first half of the novel is gradually changed in the last half to a more serious and sad experience of adulthood. This division can be observed by the titles of the different parts. The summer of youth is called “*Et In Arcadia Ego*,” alluding both the idealized baroque pastoral paintings of Nicolas Poussin and the *memento mori* where all dead once have experienced the felicity of arcadia, as well as the ironic concept that the only paradise is a doomed one (paradise lost). “*Brideshead Deserted*” is the second part where the spirit of youth has been deserted. This division is almost correct, but not quite since the desertion commences somewhat earlier in the narrative. In chapter five of the first part we have already noticed another tone in the narration: the gay old Oxford days are over and there is a temporal force backwards towards the first part. It is autumn and “the leaves were falling [...] and the familiar bells now spoke of a year’s memories” (95). Within the analeptic narrative there are more frequent analepses, pointing back to the idealized youth, regretting that irrevocable past. This retro-movement is announced by the narrator in the first page of the second part, when he “took it to be youth, not life, that [he] was losing” (211). Later, the narrator continues: “I thought of the youth with the teddy-bear under the flowering chestnuts” (290). It is a

curious line, since it is both forcing us back to the earlier text through the explicit words “I thought of the youth” but also more implicitly through the use of the symbolic teddy-bear, which we, of course, remember as something precious to Sebastian and representative of the craziness of the early Oxford years:

Beyond the gate, beyond the winter garden that was once the lodge, stood an open, two-seater Morris-Cowley. Sebastian’s teddy bear sat at the wheel. We put him between us – ‘Take care he’s not sick’ – and drove off. (19)

This retro motion in the text is exactly what we mean by activating our *textual memory*.

In real life we “have the capacity,” Hart writes, “to hold the past in retention and to keep the past alive so that when the right moment arrives the ‘living memory’ comes into play which gives a special sense to our present” (401). This “living memory” is what I in narrative terms call *textual memory*. Reading “does not merely flow forward, but [...] recalled segments also have a retroactive effect, with the present transforming the past” (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 115). Our relation to our textual memory has been illustrated by an experiment conducted by D. H. Howes and C. E. Osgood (1954). Participants were given a sequence of four words and told to associate with the last word only and disregard the three previous ones. Still, the experiment showed that the experience of the last word was fundamentally influenced by the previous words. The word “dark” created associations with hell when it was preceded by “devil, fear and sinister” whereas it had more neutral connotations when preceded by less emotional charged words. Hence, what is remembered enters into a constant interplay with

modified “expectations aroused by the individual correlates in the sequence of sentences” (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 111). These expectations do not only involve textual memory but also future expectations on the narrative. Thus we can decide on a diagram of what Iser terms the “wandering viewpoint” (109), the way we as readers constantly choose to rely in the past, present, or future narration.

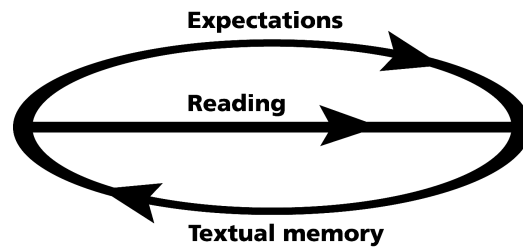


Fig. 10. The Wandering Viewpoint.

The retrospective and anticipating movements are not only a result of the intent of the text but also due to the status of the reader: “Any successful transfer however—though initiated by the text—depends on the extent to which this text can activate the individual reader’s faculties of perceiving and processing” (Iser, *The Act of Reading* 107). They are also a result of the essence of reading, that a text can never be grasped in the whole but always have to deal with temporalities. But whether we dwell in our reading memory, are seduced by the “presentness,” “lifted out of time [...]” (156), or governed by our expectations, the retrospective and anticipating movements are in fact created by our *textual memory*.

Menakhem Perry writes in his illuminating article “Literary Dynamics: How the Order of a Text Creates Its Meanings” that “a ‘backward’ directed activity, even only in the mind, plays a major role in the reading-

process" (58). Thus he makes the important distinction between retrograde movements that are forced more explicitly by the text through analepses or narrative directions towards past narrative events *and* more implicit patterns in the present text that, in conjunction with the reader's own investments, trigger past textual memories. In the former case we can perhaps not speak of memory since an analepsis repeats, or completes, a past story event, but in the latter scenario where this backward activity occurs in the "mind" we can definitely speak of textual memory.

If we return to the example of *Brideshead Revisited*, it is the division of its narrative into two parts that interests us. The nostalgic experience is, as we have seen in chapter two, a two-fold experience. For the purpose of clarity, let us resume this line of thought. The emotional content of the nostalgic experience consists of two emotional phases. The first is the remembrance of an idealized memory that brings immediate happiness and great emotional affection, and the senses unite in recreating something past – let us call this element *happiness*. It is soon transformed into a more intellectual and reasoning second state, which we can call *reflection*. When we leave the spontaneity of the first emotional response and enter the more reflective state, where one is reminded of the passing status of the hyper-memory, melancholia is created. Altogether, though, the nostalgic experience ends in the bittersweet.

In fiction it is possible to use these two elements of the nostalgic experience structurally and create a fictive nostalgic experience. One part can engage and thrill the reader into experiencing it as a present. A latter part confronts the reader through melancholia and reflections upon his own textual memory of the first part. What is gained here is a fictional creation, a substitution of the nostalgic experience, that in many ways works like the

real one in terms of the complicated two-folded structure and its relation between present and past.

The activation of the textual memory in the latter part of the narrative occurs through different narrative and stylistic techniques. It is through the more subtle use of narrative mood and voice that the narrator can implicitly control the reader's wandering viewpoint. An internal analepsis, signalling its temporal departure clearly, unavoidably transports the reader into the past narration either by repetition or completion. It resembles the involuntary memory in the way we are forced back by the ordering of story events. However, the subtlety of connotative words, phrases, quotations, repetitions, and recurring themes and styles require a more deliberate personal reaction. The textual past will not inevitably be evoked in the reader but must pass a subjective interpretative phase. Thus, it is in a way the reader's own choice if he wants to recall the textual memory.

Perry distinguishes between *retrospective repatterning* and *retrospective additional patterning* (59-60). Retrospective repatterning is "the sharpest backward action [...] in the course of reading" and constitutes a replacement of how the reader felt about a previous event (60). Retrospective additional patterning is less radical; instead of replacing the textual memory, it modifies it (59). Since we want to modify our past textual memory, not delete it, in order to preserve the dichotomy between past and present in nostalgic narration, we are more concerned with retrospective additional patterning. Even if the division in the narrative is able to establish a clear and precise break with our textual memory, the actual experience of this break is more gradual. "The reader 'strives' to retain the old [memories] for as long as possible," writes Perry, reminding us that the reader reacts more slowly than the narrative's division might suggest (60). Perry also acknowledges research

that shows that “when two sides of a controversy or an argument are presented, the side presented first has the advantage” (53). This, together with a slower and more careful reading tempo in the beginning due to a lack of expectations, gives the earlier part of the text larger importance and increases the possibility of emotional inclusion (53). If we, with a division of a text, want to challenge the textual memory, we can do it easily, but we must do it gradually. This division will then create an emotional contrast between memory and the present. “When it proves impossible to regard the sequel as compatible with a particular aspect of the preceding material,” writes Perry, “[...] the discrepancy will become sharper and will *tend towards the maximal contrast*” (52).

To exemplify how a narrative can create a division between narrative parts, where the evocation of textual pasts changes our present reading situation, we can look at the famous sudden death of Mrs. Ramsay in brackets in part two, “Time Passes”, in Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. The reader is rather shocked by Mrs. Ramsay’s sudden death: “[Mr Ramsay stumbling along a passage stretched his arms out one dark morning, but Mrs Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, he stretched his arms out. They remained empty.]” (146-47). The shock is partly achieved, as illustrated by Randall Stevenson, by the strange syntax of the first sentence: “[it] is itself a passage readers are bound to stumble over because of its fractured temporality and the odd, almost a-syntactic way it is expressed” and by the marginalization of such an important event (Stevenson and Goldman 174). The shock of death’s marginalization, however intensified it becomes in its minimalist representation, has much more to do with the narrative set-up and the narrative presumptions in the reader than the actual brackets. Stevenson writes: “Mrs Ramsay’s death disturbs not only the readers’



emotions, but their expectations of the path the story will follow and the structure and logic it can use to reach its end" (175). Through the focalization primarily through Mrs. Ramsay in the first part, "The Window," we not only identify emotionally and intellectually with her, but we also determine that this will be "her" story; we expect that the story will end with her. The narration of the first section, "The Window," also defines it as belonging to a specific genre by "endow[ing] [Mrs Ramsay] with many of the inclinations of a novelist – at any rate, a conventional Victorian or Edwardian novelist – especially in her concern with social harmony and the establishment of relationships firm and satisfactory enough to ensure continuity and a secure future" (Stevenson and Goldman 175). When Woolf describes Mrs. Ramsay's death in brackets, she confronts us with our textual memory of "The Window." The sudden death of Mrs. Ramsay is not what we expect from the narrative set-up; hence it is just as dramatic as death usually is in real life. It is not only a matter of a character's death; it is the death of fiction itself, or at least it questions the validity of the normative narrative structure dependent on a tight closure of characters and themes. Furthermore, since the physical amount of pages that remain is felt by the reader as he holds the book in his hands, it arouses both suspicion and curiosity as to where the narrative will go from there.

The last part, "The Lighthouse", completely confronts "The Window" in style and ideas, suggesting a break point in narrative fiction: "'The Window' [is] still haunted by the Edwardian age it represents, still shaped and concluded partly in terms of its conventions; while 'The Lighthouse' is representative of some of the priorities of the modernist age of the twenties" (Stevenson and Goldman 177). The nostalgic sentiments and the concerns for a new future in the last part of the book would not have been emotionally

evoked in the reader if this part had not confronted the textual memory of “an old world” in the first part. However, and most importantly, these evocations are ones which the reader may or may not choose to engage in.

### **Nostalgia within the Text: Textual Memory in *The Great Gatsby***

*The Great Gatsby*<sup>47</sup> is a prime example of how a novel is divided into two distinctive parts, where the second part actively creates retroactive movement towards its textual past in order to create a textual nostalgia, a nostalgia within the text. This section will provide an analysis of how this rather special kind of nostalgia is evoked basically through the two stylistic binaries *distance* and *presence* that we encountered earlier when we discussed the narrative voice and mood in *Gatsby*. We will not repeat that analysis but we should keep it in our mind since it is an additional technique to the ones we will explore here. Although *Gatsby* is a seminal nostalgic novel, it is not as such we will interpret it now. We will focus on the idea of nostalgia and textual memory and thus use examples that certify these connections in *Gatsby*. That means that we will not be concerned with additional nostalgic imagery or styles *if* they are *not* playing a part in the analysis of textual memory.

In *Gatsby*, chapters one to four have spontaneity, a stylistic directness that seduces the reader into the *happiness* element of nostalgia. The aura of mystery, uncertainty about the characters, the romantic lyricism, the narrative coherence – they all transfer the reader to the summer of 1922 in a

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<sup>47</sup> I will from here on refer to *The Great Gatsby* as *Gatsby*.

way that turns this summer not only into Nick's memory, but also the reader's own textual memory. The way we tend to read more actively and slower in the beginning of a text also aids this creation of a textual memory. The reading of this first part of the book corresponds with this first nostalgic element of joy and happiness and is achieved by a literary *presence*. Chapter five forms an obvious zenith, where not only dreams and memories crash with the present through Gatsby's effort to recreate the past: "'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!'" (116). The novel also commences to captivate a more sober, distanced, and commenting style. This escalates in chapter six to eight where the second element of nostalgia, *reflection*, elucidates an apparent reconstruction of the past, where the effects, and "hang-over" after the initial gaiety are presented. This reflective phase is activated through literary *distance*. The narrative experience as a whole is conveyed by Leonard Baird as a sense of party and hangover: "[...] when you get through with the story [*The Great Gatsby*] you feel as if you'd been some place where you had a good time, but now entertain grave doubts as to the quality of the synthetic gin" (208). The sense of a party and a hangover corresponds very well with the binaries of presence and distance.

Since the first part of *Gatsby* is so direct, so immediate, simulating closely that of a selected memory of our own, we confront the latter part of the novel with great emotion. This confrontation, one could argue, is really an encounter with our own textual hyper memory – the idealized memory of the first part of the book. The dream, not only Gatsby's, but also our own, vanishes further and further away from us until it freezes into the effects of nostalgia – the entropic a-temporal melancholia of the last chapter (as we have seen in chapter four about hypothetical nostalgia). As Gautam Kundu has recognized, the world in the first part is "made gorgeous by the magic

touch of a romantic imagination that nevertheless moves inexorably toward eventual disintegration and dissolution" (34). Let us explore this course of action in a more detailed way.

### **The Never-Ending Party – the Creation of a Textual Hyper Memory**

In order to create a lasting impression on the reader, a textual hyper memory, Fitzgerald uses several narrative and stylistic techniques. It is crucial to include the reader in the textual experience, draw him in emotionally into the narrative, and eliminate the distance between narrative and reader in order to seduce him. The narrative has to have a strong presence on the reader. One strategy that achieves this is a narrative mood and voice that alternates between presence and distance as we have seen in chapter four. There are other strategies that add additional presence and this section will deal with these strategies and how they all work towards inclusion of the reader.

One of the most important techniques is the carefully constructed and coherent narrative structure of the first part. This narrative flow, the feeling of narrative consciousness and order that comforts the reader in the first three chapters, is constructed through different "relations between the structural units" (Doyno 103). Let us look at three examples of how this coherence is achieved.

Several critics, among them James E Miller, Jr., have noted that the three first chapters of *The Great Gatsby*, all represent three different parties: "The first three chapters of the book, for example, are devoted to the preparation for and presentation of three scenes: the comparatively 'proper' dinner party at the Buchanan's in East Egg, the wild drunken party at Tom and Myrtle's apartment in New York, and the huge, extravagant party at Gatsby's mansion in West Egg" (100). Even if Miller, first and foremost,

regards this as evidence of Fitzgerald's "art of selection" in which Fitzgerald introduces the key characters of the novel as well as main themes and locations, I consider, in consonance with Norman Holmes Pearson, that it also introduces the reader into a world of illusions and a sense of one, long, never-ending party. The three parties "blend into a stereopticon of the illusions which give color to the world in which all of these people live [...]" (Pearson 25).

Furthermore, the chapters are interlaced through a continuous temporal progression, even though they take place on different days, "a continuance in time" as Robert Emmet Long expresses it (112). The Buchanan party takes place from lunch to afternoon, the hotel party from afternoon to evening, and Gatsby's party from evening until long after midnight. Thus, there is a time progression from lunch to after midnight, a structure which "binds the opening chapters together and adumbrates the novel's movement from day into night, from light into darkness" (112).

Finally, in much the way a detective story works, Fitzgerald creates reader curiosity, thanks to a technique that links the different chapters with each other, reminiscent of the cliff hangers of a detective story. In each chapter, Fitzgerald introduces a theme, an event or a character which creates a certain curiosity about the next chapter. This tension increases towards the chapter's coda. We can exemplify this with chapter one, where Gatsby is introduced almost as a mythic figure during the dinner at the Buchanan's:

"You live in West Egg," she [Jordan] remarked contemptuously. "I know somebody there."  
 "I don't know a single—" [said Nick]  
 "You must know Gatsby."

“Gatsby?” demanded Daisy. “What Gatsby?”  
 Before I could reply that he was my neighbor dinner  
 was announced [...] (15-16)

The reader is naturally well aware of Gatsby through the title of the novel, which includes his name, and Nick’s (vague) mention of him in the opening of the introductory chapter. Still, we don’t really know anything concrete about him. Nevertheless, we become very curious about Daisy’s strong reaction when his name is mentioned coincidentally. Gatsby is mentioned once again before the end of the chapter when Nick tells Jordan that Gatsby is his neighbour. Even during this scene, the dialogue changes immediately into something else because Jordan is inquisitive about the art of Daisy and Tom’s conversation:

“This Mr. Gatsby you spoke of is my neighbor—” I  
 said.  
 “Don’t talk. I want to hear what happens.” (19)

Our curiosity reaches a climax in the end of chapter one when we stand in “East Egg” together with Nick and gaze out over Gatsby’s garden:

The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight and turning my head to watch it I saw that I was not alone—fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor’s mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens.

I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction.

But I didn't call to him for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone—he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness. (25-26)

The scene is inclined to create a mysterious atmosphere. It includes several words associated with the gothic: "silhouette of a moving cat," "moonlight," "figure," "mansion," "stars," "dark water," "nothing," "unquiet darkness." Gatsby remains enigmatic, a "figure" since Nick chooses not to address him. Gatsby's physical pose is quite peculiar: "[...] he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way." Then he disappears into the darkness like a Mephisto, leaving Nick alone in the dark, wondering, together with the reader: "Who's Gatsby" and "What does the green light represent"?

In chapter two, Gatsby is not even mentioned, so our curiosity is further stimulated. This is all settled in the very first paragraph of chapter three: "There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer nights" (43). We hope that we will get closer to the character of Gatsby, but it is more of an illusion because, even though Nick describes in great detail the first party he participates in, Gatsby still remains a figure in the shadows. We are deluded through rumours and false statements. A woman relates an

incident when Gatsby bought her a new dress when her old one has been ruined at one of his parties. Her friend answers:

“There’s something funny about a fellow that’ll do a thing like that,” said the other girl eagerly. “He doesn’t want any trouble with *anybody*.” [...]

“I don’t think it’s so much *that*,” argued Lucille skeptically; “it’s more that he was a German spy during the war.” (48)

Then the guests testify about a host nobody seems to know or hardly recognize. And when he finally shows, he does so in a shimmer of anonymity:

I turned again to my new acquaintance. “This is an unusual party for me. I haven’t even seen the host. I live over there—” I waved my hand at the invisible hedge in the distance, “and this man Gatsby sent over his chauffeur with an invitation.”

For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand.

“I’m Gatsby,” he said suddenly. (52)

This mystery technique runs through the whole novel, but as usual with mysteries they are more intriguing in the beginning than towards the end. We have seen how Gatsby’s background and economic enterprises purposely have been obscured through repeated narrative frequency; of having the information being retold, and repeated with different content, by others. The mystification of Gatsby is an important part of creating narrative movement and progress, and therefore also in sustaining a flow in the early chapters that encourages the reader’s inclusion.



Another inclusive strategy, identified by Kundu, is the speed and movement in the first three chapters (75). This motion is realized through a summarizing *duration* due to elliptic montage techniques and a distinct style, which Kundu relates to that of the film camera.<sup>48</sup> The inclusive character is a result of these strategies' effect on "the reader's sense impressions" and creates a reader's "happening" (75). This summary, leaving out important information, engages the reader and concentrates the prose to a more effective and elevated style. The quick narrative pace in the opening chapters is partly due to the number of ellipses and scenes that are packed into these chapters exceeds those in the latter and that the time consuming analepses are almost absent. In chapter one, commencing with Nick's arrival to West Egg, we find four ellipses. Chapter two exhibits a great increase with twenty-four, much due to Fitzgerald's recapturing of Nick's drunken feeling at the apartment party. Chapter three contains around twenty-nine. We have to be necessarily vague, since it is rather difficult to separate scenes with any accuracy from the iterative and summarizing style of Nick the Narrator. Its approximation, though, allow us to compare it to chapter six that contains ten scenes, chapter seven that contains six scenes, and chapter eight, which in its numerable analepses is much more a retracing of the past than living the present.

The rich texture of Fitzgerald's prose in the first part creates much of visual stimuli (amera eye) in its exploration of colours and texture in its heavy use of adjectives. The gardens are "burning gardens" (11), windows are "glowing [...] with reflected gold" (11) or "gleaming white against the

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<sup>48</sup> I will not speculate on whether Fitzgerald is inspired by the language of film or not. However, the terminology that Kundu uses to describe Fitzgerald's prose, a terminology derived from film theory, I find very useful in describing the uniqueness of his prose.

fresh grass" (12). Even the "Valley of Ashes" is inviting in its textured descriptions, despite its bleakness (Kundu 38-39).

The visual qualities of the prose suggest the motion of a camera that transforms its fluid prose into a sensation of a literary awe. Thus, the traditional pausing duration of a heavy descriptive narrative paradoxically creates a sense of movement and speed. Kundu exemplifies this in the opening sequence, when Nick for the first time visits the Buchanans (Kundu 34-35). The first description of the house is like a cinematic wide long shot, covering a wide scope of the surroundings over the bay: "Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water [...]" (10). When Nick actually arrives at their house, the wide long shot has been replaced with a tighter one: "a cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion overlooking the bay" (11). Then Fitzgerald's prose follows that of an inward motion:

The lawn started at the beach and ran toward the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sun-dials and brick walks and burning gardens—finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with the reflected gold, and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch. (11)

The inward motion towards Tom, simulating that of a camera movement, creates a sense of textual motion which is quite seductive in the way it emphasizes motion, speed, and a three-dimensional world.

This cinematic strategy of motion is also present in the scene when Nick sees Gatsby for the first time. It is identified as a pan shot, where the

cat's movement reinforces the horizontal movement of Nick's head (Kundu 37): "The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight and turning my head to watch it I saw that I was not alone [...]" (25). The movement is continued through Gatsby's stretching out his arms towards the sea: "I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light [...]" (26). These "tracking shots" create the kind of motion that engages and draws the reader into the textual world.

We spoke earlier about the long never-ending party as a result of narrative strategies. The vagueness of such an a-temporal party facilitates possibilities of reader associations with their own biographical past and is therefore important in order to heighten the emotional content of the textual hyper-memory. The fact that these parties take place during the summer further encourages nostalgic identifications. One thing that emphasizes the feeling of a long, never-ending party (the party of a life time) is Fitzgerald's use of *iterative frequency*, or more specifically *pseudo-iterative frequency*. In chapter one and two the frequency is singulative; what is told once in the narrative also happens once in the story. However, in the beginning of the third chapter, Fitzgerald departs from this classic narration and starts telling once in the narrative what happens several times in story time. There was not music from Gatsby's house once, but "through the summer nights" (43). Before Nick arrives at Gatsby's party, Nick briefly summarizes all parties of the summer. That passage is a cavalcade of events and experiences as these illustrative fragments show: "In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and champagne and the stars" (43), "On week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city [...]" (43), and "Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York—every Monday these same oranges

and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves" (43). Fitzgerald's nouns remain indefinite, such as "week-ends," "men and girls," or through the use of the word "every" before the nouns. The iterative time is a summarizing time, a best-of cavalcade over the memories and festivities of the summer. The pseudo quality arises out of the unbelievably detailed repetitiousness of the acts. This *pseudo-iterative* further creates a sense of idealized timelessness through its unreliable narration.

In the midst of this iterative description something occurs that further accentuates the feeling of presence in these opening chapters. Fitzgerald abandons his faithful and sober past tense in favour of a more direct present tense – shortening the *distance* in Genette's terms. The transition is marked only with an indentation:

In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another.

By seven o'clock the orchestra **has** arrived—no thin five piece affair but a whole pit full of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos and low and high drums. The last swimmers **have** come in from the beach **now** and **are dressing** upstairs; the cars from New York **are parked** five deep in the drive, and already the halls and salons and verandas **are** gaudy with primary colors and hair **shorn** in strange new ways and shawls beyond the dreams of Castile. The bar **is** in full swing and **floating** rounds of cocktails **permeate** the garden outside until the air **is** alive with chatter and laughter and casual innuendo and instructions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names. (my emphasis, 44)

Fitzgerald continues his lyrical meditation upon these nostalgic summer parties in present tense in a dozen lines before he returns to past tense when Nick arrives at the party. The return to past tense also concludes the iterative form, and the parties become *the party*, as in the first party Nick participates in. This shift in tense also become a shift from a more distanced narration to a more immediate prose which brings the readers closer to relating Nick's experience with their own. According to the split narrative, the readers' experience of this first part *must* be so strong that when the second element of nostalgia (reflection) is manifested in the second half of the novel, the readers react with a feeling of loss, a textual loss.

The method of triggering nostalgia through music is very appropriate since music and sound in many aspects communicate more directly to our feelings. In doing so, they often become important connotations of memories to us. The long quotation above represents a good example of the musicality in Fitzgerald's prose, a matter discussed by Langman (31-40) and Jackson R. Bryer (123-27). This musicality is especially noticeable in the first half of the novel when it intends to pull the reader into the ecstasy and presence of the narrative, as well as in the very end when there is a settlement between the two different nostalgic elements. The first thing that strikes us is the long winding sentences, where the subordinate clauses play and complement each other, not unlike the instruments in a string quartet. In the passage above, we find only four periods, which means there is a flow and a rhythm containing repetitions. Asyndeton and polysyndeton, as we have seen in chapter four, function as pausing elements instead of periods and create a sense of awe through the strong impressions.

In the numerous references to music there's also much in the style that associates with music. Bryer calls attention to Fitzgerald's use of verbs to

create movement but also to suggest the pregnancy of audibility. As an example, Jackson quotes words like “splash” and “slit” (Bryer 126). In our sequence above we find fifteen verbs, a fact which would not be worth noting if they didn’t occur in a paragraph which usually is interpreted as descriptive and illustrative. At least one of these verbs, “shorn,” also contains onomatopoeic phonetic qualities. The sound imagery is otherwise based on phrases such as “the bar is in full swing” and “the air is alive with chatter and laughter.”

The rich texture of Fitzgerald’s prose is thus not only reflected in its visual qualities but also in its descriptions of sounds, which further work inclusively in how they add atmosphere and sensuality to the narrative. The sounds of the summer are constantly infiltrating and fortifying our physical reading experience. It is the “whip and snap” (12) of curtains, white dresses “rippling and fluttering” (12), and the “groan” (12) of a picture on the wall in the open windy summer room at the Buchanans. It is the “boom” (12) and death of the “caught wind” (12) when the door is shut. The nightingale sings outside (20). Jordan Baker reads a newspaper, her words “murmurous and uninflected, running together in a soothing tune” (22), turning pages with “a flutter of slender muscles in her arms” (22). At night the “wind had blown off, leaving a loud bright night with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life” (25).

In this coherent first part of the book, where we are drawn into the never ending party, our nostalgia is reinforced by the obvious contrast between the fairy, dreamy backgrounds of *Daisy* and *Gatsby* and “the ash heap” in chapter two:

This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens, where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of grey cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-grey men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud which screens their obscure operations from your sight. (27)

The descriptive prose is just as extravagant in its profligacy of adjective and metaphor as in the romantic passages, although bleaker. Instead of luring us into the atmosphere of nostalgia, Fitzgerald scares us into the nightmare of the present through dark dissonant words like “grotesque,” “men who move dimly,” “powdery air,” “grey cars crawls,” and a resort to the present tense. By reminding us of the realities of life in the description of the grey, dull environment where Wilson and his wife live under the constant supervision of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg, the exquisitely beautiful parties become even more exquisite and suggestive. The ash heap represents the present, what we inevitably long to leave, while the parties are a sharply defined past. In nostalgia there is always a core of something positive, a never-ending party, but it is not until we connect it to the present that nostalgia is fulfilled. This is even more apparent in the latter part of *Gatsby*.

### **The Nostalgic Hang-Over**

The euphoric, debauched happiness disappears in chapter five. Instead of continuing the joyful summer of 1922, we are moved backward in time more and more often through multiple analepses. These disturb the seductiveness and presence in the experience and bring, in addition to Nick’s more

diagnostic narrator's voice, a more sober and reflective style. Since we have been dependent on the romantic prose in the first half of the book, we miss it now; everything has become duller. Fitzgerald achieves this effect in several different ways.

Early in the introduction of chapter six we notice the difference, since it is the first time (with the exception of chapter two) that Nick is not present in the very opening of a chapter. All previous chapters have opened with an emphasis on Nick as a subject; it has always been certain that he is the narrator. Chapter one starts with "In **my** younger [...]" (my emphasis, 5), in chapter three, "There was music from **my** neighbor's house" (my emphasis, 43). It takes ten lines in chapter four until Fitzgerald stresses Nick's subject, "Once **I** wrote down" (my emphasis, 65) but in chapter five he returns to his old principle with "When **I** came home" (my emphasis, 86). I have deliberately avoided mentioning chapter two since it is an exception. It begins with an introductory description of the ash heap before Nick's presence is revealed after one page with "that **I** first met" (my emphasis, 28). It is not strange, in this case, that Fitzgerald awaits Nick's arrival, because chapter two is a contrast to the otherwise flowing first half of the novel, as noted above. As in chapter two, the latter part of *Gatsby*, and the loss of Nick, creates a momentum of uneasiness; we have been used to having our cicerone by our side.

Furthermore, as we have seen in the section about narrative mood and voice in *Gatsby* in chapter four, there is an increase of distance and a decrease of presence in the narrative mood and voice in the latter part of *Gatsby*. This increased distance is established because we now are in a more analytical part of the narration. Gone are the impressionistic descriptions of events and characters in favour of reasoning. Nick's narrating distance increases when



he penetrates the emptiness, superficiality, and alienation around him. He is no longer seduced by what he sees, and, in extension, he no longer seduces us.

If that was not enough, enter autumn. The early summer's promises of happiness and happenings transform into a blues of melancholia, decadence and a remembrance of the forgotten when the leaves turn yellow. The presence of autumn reverberates in the prose in phrases such as "disappearing under the August foliage" (110) and "The next day was broiling, almost the last, certainly the warmest, of the summer" (120). Further into the narrative the entrance of autumn becomes more tangible: "there was an autumn flavor in the air" (161), "the yellowing trees [...] an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves" (169). The sense of melancholia is also more implicit: "Her glance left me and sought the lighted top of the steps where 'Three o'Clock in the Morning,' a neat sad little waltz of that year, was drifting out the open door" (115). Furthermore, it is not by pure chance that Gatsby's first meeting with Daisy, retold by Gatsby, takes place during autumn, with all the clichés of autumn: "...One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling [...]" (117) The autumn of memory corresponds with the narrative autumn and contrasts the earlier textual memory of summer and summer analepses.

The divided narrative in *Gatsby* is essential in order for us to create and reflect upon our own textual memory. However, in preventing this division from being too abrupt (what Perry calls *retrospective repatterning*), a symmetry must assist the reader in the reverberation of his textual memory. The usage and re-usage of simple symbols create symmetry that becomes the skeleton of the novel. Fitzgerald gradually transforms these symbols in order

to play with our textual memory and emotionally distort it. They resemble, in an artificial way, the triggers of memories.

One such recurring motif is the use of flowers in general and pink roses in particular. They connect our experiences from the first part with the latter in a way that we, perhaps subconsciously, are reminded of that first experience and the happiness of our textual memory. Langman writes that they function "as a simple unifying device, reminding us of one scene as we read another" (43). There are several rose motifs in the opening of the novel. The first that attracts Nick's attention at the Buchanans' home is the rose garden: "a half acre of deep pungent roses [...]" (12). Later, Nick and Tom enter "into a bright rosy-colored space" (12), the hallway. They look through "a rosy-colored porch" (16), and Daisy (herself named after a flower) calls Nick "a rose, an absolute rose" (19).

In the latter part of the novel these rose motifs reappear with regularity and remind us of the beginning of the novel: "Our eyes lifted over the rosebeds" (124), "I could think of nothing except the luminosity of his pink suit under the moon" (150), and "the pink glow from Daisy's room [...]" (152). But it is not only through the noun "rose" that Fitzgerald reminds us of the past. His vocabulary is overrepresented by "rose" the verb: "With an effort her wit rose faintly [...]" (132), "a tiny gust of powder rose from her bosom [...]" (122). Even a melody assists our chain of associations: "someone had begun to whistle 'The Rosary,' [...]" (178).

Gradually these symbols change. Once representing love and passion, they will be exchanged for resignation as in the "crushed flowers" and "fruit rinds" (116) at the end of the final party, the flower-laden hearse of Gatsby's funeral or Gatsby's recollection of them: "He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a

grotesque thing a rose is [...]” (169). Likewise, these roses will allude to Robert Herrick’s famous “Gather ye rosebuds while ye may” for Daisy when Gatsby leaves for the war:

All night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of the ‘Beale Street Blues’ while a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust. At the grey tea hour there were always rooms that throbbed incessantly with this low sweet fever, while fresh faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor. (158)

With J. S. Westbrook’s words, “the world cannot be made to bloom perpetually” (81), it is as if there is “an overripeness, an unnatural plenitude in this new Eden [...]” (81) or a “buried fertility [...]” (83) that carries into the last symbols of the vanished promises of the New Land.

Another colour motif used frequently by Fitzgerald is “white,” and this colour helps to mythologize Daisy for Gatsby and the reader with its connotations of childhood and innocence. The colour white is used in phrases such as “the white palaces of fashionable East Egg [...]” (10) through “The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass [...]” (12) to Jordan’s voice “that was as cool as their white dresses [...]” (17), and their innocent childhood: “Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white——” (24). References to “white” appear on more or less every page. In the latter part of the novel “six pair of white duck trousers” (106) are displayed, an actress sits under “a white plum tree” (111), and Gatsby remembers his autumn night with Daisy when “the sidewalk was white with moonlight” (117) and “Daisy’s white face came up to his own” (117). In the end, Nick stares at Gatsby’s “white steps [...]” (188).

The later motifs associated with “white” effectively juxtapose our earlier reminiscences of the glorious, promising, and innocent past such as the snow in Nick’s story about his youth: “When we pulled out into the winter night and the real snow, our snow, began to stretch out beside us [...]” (184). Another example is the descriptions of Daisy, who is “gleaming like silver” (157) on her veranda, “bright with the bought luxury of star-shine [...]” (157). Likewise, the meaning of the colour yellow is transformed, most obviously through Gatsby’s yellow car that first transports guests to and from his dazzling parties, but in the end turns into the death car Daisy uses when she kills Myrtle (Westbrook 81).

In the use of sounds, we also see a change between part one and two in order to assist our longing back to our textual memory. In the transitional fifth chapter, the summer rain subtly changes character from soft and wonderful to a windy and loud thunder as the story progresses towards its ultimate fate of Gatsby’s nostalgic dream. It is the zenith, the narrative break point, when the reader suddenly emotionally becomes aware of the impossibility of Gatsby’s project. The “faint flow of thunder along the Sound” (101) synchronizes with this feeling of irrecoverable moments, a loss that even Gatsby seems to realize when “Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion” (101). Later on, after Myrtle’s death, the merry sounds of the summer birds have completely changed into singing “ghostly birds” (159). As Kundu profoundly has observed, “[t]he hiatus between beauty and the romance of nature and humanity’s tragic fate [...]” is established through the diverse use of sounds and descriptions of nature (101).

Another juxtaposition is that the latter part of the story is more inclined to use close ups than the inclusive seductive tracking, or zooming

shots of the first part, thus entering a more psychological tensional discourse. When Nick finds Gatsby in the pool, the camera eye does not change focal lengths from long shot to close up in order to create a sense of awe, but instead moves closely between certain symbols:

There was a faint, barely perceptible movement of the water as the fresh flow from one end urged its way toward the drain at the other. With little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool. A small gust of wind that scarcely corrugated the surface was enough to disturb its accidental course with its accidental burden. The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, tracing, like the leg of a compass, a thin red circle in the water. (170)

The emotional response to this stylistic close up technique differs radically from the one of motion that worked so inclusively in the first part. Since we already know that Gatsby lies dead in the pool, there is no mystery. The movement of the camera eye from one image to another slows down the duration of the scene drastically. Fitzgerald's literary technique "resembles filmmakers' metaphorical use of the moving camera as a consumer of time," writes Kundu. And this implies that Gatsby "is a victim not only of his impossible dream, but also of time's cruel prodigality, indeed, of the tragic flux and mutability of life itself" (Kundu 42).

We have also reached Gatsby's last party. Nick depicts his feelings toward this party with a sober sadness: "There were the same people, or at least the same sort of people, the same profusion of champagne, the same many-colored, many-keyed commotion, but I felt an unpleasantness in the air, a pervading harshness that hadn't been there before" (110). As usual,

Nick's emotions are planted into the language. Words like "harshness," "desolate" and "crushed," which phonetically sound unattractive, were not to be found in the first part of *Gatsby*. The words not only communicate emptiness and regret for the passing summer, but also in a more symbolic meaning, the tragedy of life: that today is tomorrow's past. The potent boats that "slit" the water in the beginning are replaced by "one small sail [that] crawled slowly toward the fresher sea" (124). And if the first parties revealed a sentiment that the characters were exactly where they wanted to be, they seem restless now. Inspired by the pioneer spirit and "the moon [...] in the western sky" (126) they want to go west just like Wilson and his wife.

These sentiments are cemented in words such as "overripe" (132), "motionless" (146), and "restless" (135), and the frequently used sound imagery changes character from a feeling of remembrance to one of forgetfulness: "She turned to me and her voice, dropping an octave lower, filled the room with thrilling scorn [...]" (139), "hollow, wailing sound" (145) and "I heard a low husky sob [...]" (149). Even the wedding orchestra from the ball room seems to work in a headwind: "From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot waves of air" (139).

In the end, *Gatsby's* dream dies in a manifestation of every man's past, rather than one individual's fate; the conclusion prepares us for a transcendence from an individual fate to a universal one, from a presence to a distance, creating a myth of the themes of the entire novel: "the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room" (142). We, together with the key characters of the book, travel by car towards the verge of destiny, in the most brilliant prolepsis of the novel:

“So we drove toward death through the cooling twilight” (143). The party is over. Enter: Hang-over.

In the experience of the narrative the reader encounters two divided and opposing parts. The first one enhances the imagination of the reader through a set of stylistic and narratological devices such as movement, speed, narrative coherence, atmospheric imagery, and the use of sensations in order to stimulate a creation of a reader’s textual hyper-memory. The second part creates a strong movement and longing back to this textual hyper-memory both voluntarily and involuntarily. The style of the narration is more distanced, reflective, mimetic, and filled with direct speech and analepses that slow down the speed. The past textual memory in the reader is not only evoked through the very change of style, but also through the reuse of common symbols that were developed in the first part. This division mimics that of the division of the nostalgic reaction. The first part represents the happiness of the memory, and the second part illustrates the melancholic reflection upon this memory. Thus, the process of reading *Gatsby* is similar to the process of a nostalgic reaction.

## Chapter Seven

### The Nostalgic Experience in *The Sound and the Fury*

“Man’s misfortune lies in his being time-bound” (Sartre 253).

#### Introduction

In this last chapter we will practice our method and tools on a text that might not be an obvious choice for a nostalgic study. However, as we will see, William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) contains several possibilities for creating a nostalgic reading experience. In this analysis we will offer an insight into the ways a close nostalgic reading of a whole narrative can be performed. Hopefully, this process will be both inspirational and educational for future analysis of nostalgic or other emotional responses to fiction.

*The Sound and the Fury* could be named an elegy of the past. In fact, it has been, implicitly; an array of criticism over the years has been obsessed with the novel’s relation to time. Undoubtedly it has a fixation on time through the commonly recognized divisions of time perception in the three brothers’ interiorities in the first three sections: Benjy representing the present, Quentin the past, and Jason the future (Reed 75; Lowrey). Stated more distinctly, “Benjy [...] is unconscious of time [...] Quentin obsessed by time” and “Jason [...] is harried by time [...]” (Brooks 325). Quentin’s section, especially, has undergone thorough critical examinations through its multitude of references to clocks and time and its fluid blend of past and present events, as well as Quentin’s fixation on past influences; the loss of home, childhood, and a beloved sister, and the complex syntax of Faulkner’s



narrative blending tenses and disrupting syntactical flow. One main catalyst in these areas was Jean-Paul Sartre's early influential essay "A propos de *Le Bruit et la fureur*: La Temporalité chez Faulkner" ["On *The Sound and the Fury*: Time in the Work of Faulkner"] (1939), where Sartre discusses the consequences of division between clock time and Bergsonian *durée* in Faulkner's style. Sartre elevates the book to one of modernism's great *time novels*.

To argue that *The Sound and the Fury* is a book about time is to be very imprecise; rather it strips time of its usual meanings. Most of all, it is a book about the past, about the consequences of loss and yearnings for the vanished yesterday of childhood, a sister, and a home.

This loss is personified in the absent character of Caddy, and elevated through the central image of Caddy climbing the pear tree to peep into the funeral of her "damuddy," exposing her "muddy drawers" to her three brothers. Usually this scene, with its background of Edenic allusions is considered "the fall" of Caddy in a moral sense. Even her name is derived from the Latin word "cadere" which means to fall (Fowler 32). And at least two of the brothers react to this moral decadence strongly: Quentin confuses Caddy with his longings for the past home and childhood and thus feels "disgusted" by the loss of purity in Caddy, and Jason confuses Caddy's "fall" with his own materialistic one. Caddy's moral decline is not problematic for Benjy since his defective mind cannot value the temporal changes of her character nor judge her morally, even though he senses and fears that she is slowly sliding away from him through his olfactory registrations.

There seems to be a critical confusion between being lost and a deeper sense of loss. From her family's perspective, she might be a lost girl, morally. Her rebellious and later promiscuous behaviour is, as Faulkner says,

symbolized by her muddy drawers. However, I want to argue, that the “lostness” of Caddy, is not a central issue. It colours the reactions of Quentin and Jason, but it does not alter the fact that these reactions are based on the loss of Caddy. This loss is not only moral, it is factual.

For Benjy, this loss manifests itself in his bellowing after what he lacks and she represents: security, love, motherhood, and stability. Caddy performs most of the maternal duties Benjy’s real mother rejects; hence, she becomes more of a mother to Benjy than his biological one. We could interpret Benjy’s longings as nostalgic in the Freudian sense as a desire to return to the childhood/mother.

As for Benjy, Caddy fills the absence of a mother for Quentin; she is a “mother surrogate” as suggested by John T. Matthews (*The Sound and the Fury: Faulkner and the Lost Cause* 39). He also refers to Quentin’s death by water as a return to the womb (48-49). Quentin’s incestuous interest in Caddy thus enters an even more problematic and Freudian longing for a mother. More importantly, Caddy represents the loss of childhood for Quentin. This becomes most acute, as pointed out by Mark Spilka in “Quentin Compson’s Universal Grief,” in the juxtaposition of the encounter of the little girl and Quentin’s memories of the sexual awakening of his sister (301-02).

Many see Caddy as the true heroine of the novel, patched together from bits and pieces of others’ characterization and memories of her. I would argue against that interpretation. She is a central narrative force, something of a “heroine of the narrative,” the sun of the past who other orbiting planets long for. But as a character in a story, she remains a ghost. We are betrayed, narratologically, to suppose it is a story about her; in that sense we feel abandoned in the end. We never come close to Caddy. We do come close, however, to the loss and longings of her brothers. Matthews writes in “The

Discovery of Loss in *The Sound and the Fury* that “Caddy is the figure that the novel is written to *lose* [...]” (396). He thereby extends the loss of Caddy from that of her brothers to that of the reader, which could be ascribed to a textual loss, or rather, a textual absence.

In the way Faulkner avoids the textual presumptions and anticipations in the reader, his specific style and structuring creates a textual absence of a central image or idea. We share the brothers’ loss. This is quite a different strategy than Fitzgerald uses in *Gatsby*, but not completely, since both narratives are a sort of “suspense in retrospective,” where we are aware of the “crime” early on and the rest of the narrative circles around it in an explanatory and revealing way. If Fitzgerald in *Gatsby* creates a textual memory through a repeated emphasis on presence in the early parts, so does Faulkner in a different way through his symbolic central image of the girl with muddy drawers. Let us look at this central image:

He [Versh] went and pushed Caddy up into the tree to the first limb. We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers. Then we couldn’t see her. We could hear the tree trashing.

‘Mr Jason said if you break that tree he whip you.’  
Versh said.

‘I’m going to tell on her too.’ Jason said.

The tree quit trashing. We looked up into the still  
branches. (31-32)

This scene is mentioned in Benjy’s section an additional fourteen times (Ross and Polk 6), but not in as much detail as the quotation above. Being a central image of the whole book, it might not seem so vivid at first. However, we must keep in mind that it is rendered through Benjy’s three-year-old consciousness and hence is void of associations, metaphors, and descriptive

language. Bared of temporal and spatial detailing, it creates an intensified *now*, a strong presence. It is not, however, completely void of minimalist poetry. There is the sound of “the tree trashing,” foreboding something dramatic and symbolic. There is the symbolic idea of the tree itself and its branches sensing “the dark, harsh flowing of time [...]” (Faulkner, “An introduction” 222). We have the sudden transformation of the “three thrashing” to “still branches,” accentuating the sense of change and quickly contrasting the rebellious act with an elevation of the bravest of them: Caddy is positioned above her brothers in order to signal superiority. This act will create an enlarged emotional impact on them; this is an act of envy, of putting Caddy on a pedestal, not unproblematic nevertheless. Caddy will haunt the brothers’ consciousness to a great extent in their sections, though in very different manners.

The absence of detail of the central image, and Caddy as a symbol for the brothers’ varying sense of loss, encourages the reader to exchange Caddy for whatever personal loss they might experience. The loss of Caddy will be the reader’s personal loss, a loss that the novel constantly charges around. This alone does not necessarily create a nostalgic experience in the reader; it is complemented with constant anachronies, forcing us backwards, not only to story pasts, but also to textual pasts. The actual analepses change from being homodiegetic to heterodiegetic, simulating closely that of voluntary and involuntary memory, and become the specific triggers of nostalgic memories. Furthermore, Faulkner works to both include us and alienate us from the narrative through his stylistics. The general structure of the novel also encourages a nostalgic experience, building up a personal loss through the internalized sections of Benjy and Quentin, preparing us for two different temporalities: that of our childhood, and that of losing it.

The final section leaves the personal nostalgia and commences, not unlike *Gatsby's* final section, with a more hypothetical and universal grief that creates the plateau of the entropic, nihilistic tendencies of nostalgia. The nostalgia is not for the past, it is for an a-temporal life; it is a bitter feud against time itself, may it be cosmological time, clock time, objective time, monumental time, or whatever we might call it. It is fear of death, fear of aging, fear of extinction. And this can result in nihilism, among other things. *The Sound and the Fury* does engage in Nietzschean philosophy in the way its characters feel the emptiness of present life and how this triggers fatal nostalgias in Quentin's case and vivid opportunism in Jason's. The chaos of the present world is fulfilled through the chaotic prose of Faulkner. This explains the obsession with memory both Faulkner and his characters expose. This meaninglessness is also echoed in the famous lines from *Macbeth* that the novel's title derives from: "The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! / Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player, / [...] it is a tale / Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, / Signifying nothing" (197-98, V v23-28).

This chapter will explore how the nostalgia of *The Sound and the Fury* creeps into the reader's consciousness according to our principles of the fictive nostalgic experience; hence, we will perform a close reading of the text's most important sections, Benjy's and Quentin's. Examining Benjy's and Quentin's sections more closely, we will investigate the style and structure that reinforces their respective nostalgic content before approaching the universal grief in the final section. In short, the novel creates a feeling of loss through its central characters' longing and yearning for the past, a loss that is finalized into a grief corresponding with the general structure of the nostalgic experience.

## Benjy's Section: The Age of Childhood

### Structural Temporalities

The symbolic image of loss in Caddy is explicit from the beginning. The importance of Caddy for Benjy is evident already in the golfers' screams of "Caddie" in the first page, confusing Benjy, and the reader, with his sister's name. Of course, this fact cannot be comprehended by the reader until he becomes aware of who Caddy is a few lines later and her importance for Benjy throughout the section. Just like Wolfgang Iser suggests, we are then forced back from the point in the narrative when we make this connection to the second sentence of the book, further adding to the textual pastness of the reading experience. The chaotic narrative encourages the reader to make sense of things, which guides us into re-evaluating both the present part of the reading as well as story events we have read before. Hence, the narrative memories cooperate with that of the textual ones.

It is difficult not to relate the golfers' screams with Benjy's inner shouts for his lost sister. Caddy is present with great regularity, either as part of Benjy's memories or his present emotions. Her appearance is accentuated through Benjy's lack of synonyms. Irena Kaluz states: "Benjy's beloved sister is always 'Caddy', whether she is seven or nineteen years old" (49). Being the child he is, his reaction to Caddy's absence is sudden grief, or "bellowing." While Caddy is just temporarily gone, this grief is short and ends upon her return. When she disappears, this grief must turn into trauma. However, since Benjy has no concept of time, he does not understand how long she has been gone, and that she will never return. This results in a permanent clash between hope and despair. That is perhaps the reason why his present is invaded suddenly and abruptly by memories of his sister, even though for

Benjy these memories do not appear as memories but as present states. His constant reference to Caddy smelling like trees links his memory to the tree episode. The abrupt memories, usually, but not always, signalled by the change of normal font to italics, seem strong and very vivid in their involuntary capacity. Ross and Polk identify that the temporal transitions are often guided in a Proustian manner from one sensation to another (10-11). In the novel's first time change, it is the action of getting caught in the fence that transports Benjy into an earlier episode with Caddy:

We went along the fence and came to the garden fence, where our shadows were. My shadow was higher than Luster's on the fence. We came to the broken place and went through it.

‘Wait a minute.’ Luster said. ‘You snagged on that nail again. Can’t you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail.’

*Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. (2)*

This is different from Proust's method, where the narrator simplifies the time shifts by commenting on them. We are guided here only by the italic font. The actual doubling of human memory functions through associations or motivators and gives us a more physical presence of memory and recollection. The physical presence is further aided by the use of a wide range of non-visual senses in describing forcefully the strength of the pasts, primarily through smells and sounds. Benjy rather smells or hears the past, than understands it: Caddy reminds him of the smell of trees, or leaves, pigs smell like pigs rather than look like pigs (28), trees are buzzing (30), father smells like rain (53), and Benjy hears the roof (55). This underlines the general sensorial aspects of memories in the way they are mainly associated with the non-visual senses.

The repetitions, such as “smells like rain” and the reoccurring symbols like “fire,” constantly force us back into both textual memory and the past narrative events. It is the incentive of a narrative movement backwards that engages us in recharging the meaning of our present situation through the past.

Thus, the repetitious nature of the Benjy section, with not only the imagery repeated, but also the simplicity of language, certain mantras, the physicality of the events, the similarities between the motivators, all become internalized repetitions in the reader, changing, recharging, constantly forcing us backwards into remembering things that are essentially nostalgic sentiments. Specifically, there are identical repetitions, but in the experience of the reader we must also refer to the backward movements as recollections.

### **Stylistic Temporalities**

The ambiguity of temporality as seen in the main structure of Benjy’s section is further established on its micro level. At a first reading it seems that scenes from April 7, 1928, are conveyed mainly through the use of progressive forms. Benjy’s account starts with “I could see them hitting” and “They were coming toward” (1). We are, of course, lacking time indicators since Benjy’s narrative is void of traditional time markers due to Benjy’s lack of sense of temporality and spatiality. Especially past progressives are very appropriate for conveying a nostalgic tone, since they have this unique mix of temporalities in the tense itself. If we study the first page more carefully, we notice that the past progressive style is not constant. The golfers suddenly were not taking out the flag, they “took the flag out” and Benjy was not holding on to the fence, he “held to the fence.” Throughout this section, there is a mix between past tense and past progressive tense, further blurring the



temporalities between now and then. However, if we look at the first narrative time change, we observe that we, with one exception, enter a total past tense:

*Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see. We stooped over and crossed the garden, where the flowers rasped and rattled against us. The ground was hard. We climbed the fence, where the pigs were grunting and snuffing. I expect they're sorry because one of them got killed today, Caddy said. The ground was hard, churned and knotted. (2)*

The verbs are all past tense, except for the activities of the pigs. The present tense “stoop,” “see,” “expect” are all part of the dialogue of Caddy, which is referred to as something present for Benjy.

As the narrative proceeds it becomes equally difficult to establish a concrete difference between the narrative present and past. In the present, we are, like in the beginning, challenged by the intervening past and past progressive tenses. The past sections tend towards the past tense, but the feeling of present is then balanced through the use of the present in direct speech. However, it is noteworthy that Benjy's precarious symbolic memories, especially the ones concerning Caddy, *always* are in past tense, establishing them as definitely past, even for Benjy (this is something that contradicts the sense of complete a-temporality with Benjy). For example, all Benjy's recollections of the smell of Caddy are “she *smelled* like rain” (my emphasis).

### **The Childhood Aspect of Benjy's Section**

Even though we can, through the use of italics, make distinctions between

the scenes from April 7, 1928, and the other fifteen located times, they seem appropriately muddled together, almost creating a sense of timelessness, a-temporality, perhaps even a hypothetical time. It is truly a Bergsonian time flux, where the past times flow over us involuntarily and unexpectedly.

Donald M. Kartiganer writes that "The Quality of Benjy's memory is the chief indicator of his non-human perception, for he does not recollect the past: he relieves it" (365). It is definitely not non-human, quite the contrary, rather human. It is in the matter of Bergsonian time, and not clock time, that we capture the human sensations of temporalities. Polk is closer to the truth, and addressing a more important issue, when he acknowledges that Benjy "does not use words; he does not *tell* us things, but experiences the world directly" (145). Through Benjy's experience, readers do have the possibility of sharing this kind of experience – reminding us of the phenomenological experiences of childhood.

The simplicity of Benjy's world is an important matter in the general structure of the novel. It is crucial that our experience of the first section of the novel prepares us, in different ways, for the result of nostalgia in the Quentin section. Benjy's temporality is that of a child's. Thus, in experiencing the temporality of a child, we are encouraged to return to our own past, childhood temporality. Surely, this experience is not solely one of childhood temporality since the complex narrative requires a ratiocinate reconstruction of how temporalities work. Quentin's desire, located through his dreams of Caddy and his visions of the past events in section two, is a retreat to that a-temporal state of pure childhood. Therefore, it is convenient that we are to experience that temporality previous to losing it together with Quentin in his section.

There are several aspects of Benjy's section that create the possibility of childhood identification. The first is the way Benjy seems to perceive the world in synaesthetic impressions: the world of Benjy is smell and sounds mostly, thus recreating the impression from the overwhelming physicality of childhood prior to intellectual perception.

Second, Benjy's narrative is also highly visual, rather than verbal (except dialogue), and almost "completely visual, cinematic [...]" (Polk 145). If we look at the very first sentence "Through the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting" (1), the visual aspect comes through in the "curling flower spaces." Later Benjy does not only see a flag but he also sees how it "flapped on the bright grass and the trees" (1).

Furthermore, Benjy's, and children's, incapacity to link one thing with another, is replicated in the prose, since the lack of cause and effect is obvious. He sees "them hitting," but not what they are hitting. The omission of the ball is central. Two sentences later, "Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree," but what is he hunting?

Another aspect is Benjy's lack of perspective. As Ross and Polk notice, when the golfers are further away, Benjy experiences them as "small rather than as distant" (10), communicated through Faulkner as "They were hitting little" (1).

Finally, the repetitious prose also reinforces the simplicity of childhood, and the somewhat limited perspective of the world is simulated through these repetitions and the use of a reduced number of words and expressions. When Benjy sees something twice, it gives him the same impression (the narrative often using the same exact words). In the first page, certain images are repeated constantly: the fence is mentioned eight times. The flag is mentioned five times, but the description of it is exactly

reproduced twice: “flapped on the bright grass and the trees.” The flower tree or flower space is mentioned four times.

### **In Preparation for Quentin**

Toolan recognizes that “[a] reader would have to be very insensitive to fail to discern the contrasting styles of the sections of that novel, expressing the different narrating persona of each section” (60). *The Sound and the Fury* is by all means a polyphonic novel in the ways the different styles of the four sections harmonize to create meaning. The contrast between the first two sections is enormous, as Joseph W. Reed, Jr. exclaims when he posits that coming to Quentin’s section from Benjy’s is to “return to the narrow world familiar to us from most other first-person fiction: the intimacy and participation of a shared confessional” (79). This intimacy is a key component to the textual loss we as readers will experience in Quentin’s section.

As we enter Quentin’s section, we are mentally identifying with the consciousness of childhood and its particular temporality through the style of Benjy’s section. However, in Quentin’s section we will soon share Quentin’s longing for that very childhood. This longing is not only communicated through representation but also through structure and style. Benjy might, in a general sense, be difficult to identify with because of the non-traditional way he is represented. The style of his narration, though, creates possibilities for us to achieve inclusion in the narrative since we have to interpret the lack of traditional narrative meaning. We must constantly define and redefine the narrative through the section’s anachronies within our own perceptions. The almost pre-lingual style of the prose offers us a pre-lingual experience, and this opens up memorial triggers to our own

childhood. In the Quentin section, we will share the melancholy and grief over the inevitable loss of that time with Quentin.

## Quentin: The Dualism of Time

Lawrence Thompson writes in “Mirror Analogues in *The Sound and the Fury*” that the frequent mirror analogues act as “figurative or symbolic mirroring of the meaning of a past action in a present action” (118). The importance of this evaluation is exactly the juxtaposing of past and present. It is in the distinction between how the past interferes and contrasts the present that the reading experience of anachronies turns from memory to nostalgia. Where memory is rarely connected or, more precisely, evaluated through the present, nostalgia feeds off the impossibility of the present. Memory, just like nostalgia, is triggered from something in the present. The difference is that memory leaves, unabashed, the present state to resurrect a previous episode, whereas nostalgia cannot leave the present because it is the combination of the present and past that creates the entropic melancholy. Faulkner’s careful treatment of past and present always links them inevitably together and distinguishes them as nostalgic rather than, as critics often insist, memorial.

The constant play between mechanical clock time and Bergsonian duration is an important factor in triggering the dualism of nostalgia: entrapment in the entropy of time and temporal freedom of memory and internal time. Quentin’s grief might be Caddy, or whatever she symbolizes in terms of a past as we have seen above, but our own nostalgic grief is very much based on the impossibility to halt time, to defend ourselves against death. Obviously, Quentin’s narrative informs us of this universal grief

through his interior monologues. More so, the effects of Faulkner's style create an even stronger nostalgic response in the reader.

### **Clock Time: The Temporality of Adulthood**

Quentin's section begins with "When the shadow of the sash appeared on the curtains it was between seven and eight o'clock and then I was in time again, hearing the watch" (63). The timelessness of Benjy's section has been precisely the opposite of the obsessions with time in Quentin's section. The early signalling of time through Quentin's grandfather's old clock inverts this. The temporality of childhood, which we have been lulled into through Benjy, is now fearfully changed into the adult clock time, and thus we are also as readers forcefully aware of the loss not only of the Benjy narrative, but also our own timeless childhood. This is important because, when the contrast is emphasized, it assists the nostalgic experience in the second section through the change of narrative mode and mood. We are "in time" again, and reminded of this throughout the first part of the second section.

The many time markers do not need to be demonstrated here, but their regularity does not only remind us of clock time through their actual content (one o'clock, afternoon, etc.) but also through their regularity, creating a graphic and repeated sense of a clock ticking. This is at least true in the present narrative time, which is June 2, 1910. As Quentin's narrative and psychic state becomes more and more confused and thrown into the phantoms of the past, the sense of this ticking regularity ceases to exist. It evokes, through the absence of clock time and the multiple analepses, an eerie feeling as well as a sense of freedom and a return to the a-temporal state of Benjy. The childhood Quentin evokes in the reader, in both the nostalgic imagery and narrative connotations to the repetitiousness of Benjy, forces the

reader to once again meet his own childhood and the childhood consciousness in section one.

The contrast to this clock time is then subjective time, and Quentin's movement into subjective time is symbolized through breaking his grandfather's clock. As the day goes on and Quentin drifts more and more into an analeptic narrative, the stylistic idea of repeated time markers vanishes, just like Quentin admits himself: "[...] I could hear my watch and the train dying away, as though it were running through another month or another summer somewhere [...]" (101), alluding to the times of the past rather than the clock time. Later, Caddy, in a dreamlike memory, reinforces this by asking what time it is and having Quentin answer that he does not know (129). In the car with Shreve and Gerald Bland, Quentin "could see the twilight again, that quality of light as if time really had stopped for a while [...]" (143). At the very end, just before the suicide, the clock returns with the force of its reality and Quentin's resistance to live in the present coincides with his watch "telling its furious lie [...]" (147).

### **The Involvement of Inner Time**

If the present times at Harvard start out as a frame from which memory bubbles up, then in the end it is reversed as memory obsesses Quentin fully, only to be interfered sparsely by inputs from the present. It might prove valuable to study the kind of memories that obsess Quentin, all four emotionally related to Caddy. The earliest one, just preceding the present date of June 2, 1920, by little more than a month, is Caddy's wedding to Herbert Head. What seems to cause Quentin most grief and anger is Caddy's loss of virginity and consequently Quentin's confrontation with Dalton Ames, followed by a lengthy conversation with his father, all around August

1909. Then there is one memory difficult to specify in time, but according to Ross and Polk set sometime between 1901-1906, that deals with Quentin and Caddy's sexual awakening and specifically one episode where Quentin engages in sexual doctor play with Natalie. Last, the earliest one is the central image of Caddy climbing the tree in her muddy drawers at the funeral of their grandmother. These memories are all unhappy ones, so in the sense of nostalgic memory they are certainly not idealized at all. His memories, rather like Polk recognizes, "evolve out of scenes of trauma" (150). They seem to have been distorted by Quentin himself in order to provide him with the necessary material for his inner anger. When Quentin remembers these things, they are fuelled by anger, grief, and jealousy, usually connected to Caddy in one way or another. Let us examine one of the earliest analepses:

If it had been cloudy I could have looked at the window, thinking what he said about idle habits. Thinking it would be nice for them down at New London if the weather held up like this. Why shouldn't it? The month of brides, the voice that breathed *She ran right out of the mirror, out of the banked scent. Roses. Roses. Mr and Mrs Jason Richmond Compson announce the marriage of. Roses. Not virgins like dogwood, milkweed. I said I have committed incest, Father I said. Roses. Cunning and serene. If you attend Harvard one year, but don't see the boat-race, there should be a refund. Let Jason have it. Give Jason a year at Harvard.* Shreve stood in the door, putting his collar on, his glasses glinting rosily as though he had washed them with his face. (64)

As we noticed in Benjy's analepses, the transitions are made through the idea of associations. In this case, the time at Harvard, June, is considered the "month of brides" (Ross and Polk 47) and thus generates the memory of



Caddy's wedding, which is evoked through the use of italics just as in the case with Benjy's memories. As Ross and Polk claim, the shift into the past is not always accompanied by italics, but when italics do occur, the memory is usually a very vivid and strong one (47).

The language, in describing the memory, is not that far away from the way Benjy experiences things. It is the use of unconnected images that create a confused, but immediate, capturing of emotions. "*She ran right out of the mirror*" seems at first to be a typical Benjy perception, but when we consider it more carefully, it just means that Quentin was looking at Caddy in a mirror when she ran out. This way of describing memory links us to the world of childhood and loss, as captured in Benjy's section.

The memory then adds material from the wedding announcement before entering the realm of anger, colouring the choice of words, especially the repetition of roses. This rose theme symbolizes sexuality and passion, and in the case of Caddy, her not being a virgin such as the white "dogwood" or "milkweed."

Then, quite abruptly, Quentin remembers a conversation with his father some time before, when he accused himself of having committed incest with Caddy. The anger at Caddy's sexuality, linked to his father's equally strange conception of women, creates this transition – emotionally logical, but prosaically difficult to follow.

Next, the roses return in an odd oxymoron as being "cunning and serene." This, as Ross and Polk observe, creates a peculiar new feeling: "The roses are beautiful yet complex, like love itself, which is both beautiful and threatening to Quentin" (48). Like nostalgia's two contrasting elements, the oxymoron also contains this dichotomy of happiness and regret, and as a synthesis of these, creates an absolute new emotion.

The memory is then concluded with a fragment of a conversation about how Quentin really does not want to go to Harvard and that his brother Jason could have gone instead, before the present re-enters through his friend Shreve. The memory lingers on in the prose through the use of “rosily” which alludes to the memory’s rose-theme.

Quentin’s kind of memories are a very different kind of memories than Benjy’s (although they share some common characteristics), whose were more like a boxed event, clearly distinct to the present time through the use of italics. Quentin’s memories operate in a different way in that they are much more fragmentary and fluid. His memories are much more realistic than in the more common literary homodiegetic style where the memory is included in the narrative voice, since our own memories tend to be more of this associative, fragmented sort.

These memories capture the essential phenomenology of nostalgia, and as such, give the reader a fictive nostalgic experience by closely simulating that of a real nostalgic experience. The order of the experience in Quentin’s memory resembles the order of the nostalgic memory: remembering a past event, regretting this past event, and feeling a strong emotion of regret and loss which results in the peculiar feeling of contrasts between pleasure and pain. Quentin’s memories and nostalgic memory, thus, share the same transitional system. Furthermore, they both reach back to an emotional state rather than a scenic memory. As we have seen in exploring the nostalgic experience, we realize that nostalgia usually concerns a consciousness or a complex emotional state of mind. The use of triggers and motivators, as well as the specificity of memory, is only one phase in grabbing this nostalgic consciousness. What Faulkner does, simultaneously

to describing the memory, is to also add the melancholy of loss into the vibrations and emotions of his prose.

### **The Sensations of Memory**

As Quentin's section progresses, the past mingles with the present in more complicated ways, climaxing in one deep and long analepsis, concerned with the preceding events of Caddy's adventures with Dalton Ames (starting on page 125 and ending on page 138). The lack of punctuation, capitalizations, indentations, and apostrophes seem to be "indicative of Quentin's fractured narrative control" (Ross and Polk 128). For once, the term *stream of consciousness* seems highly appropriate, since it is a flow of emotions, sensations, flashes of memories, poetic images, and allusions, that forcefully propels the reader into the same dream world of involuntary memory.

In this sense of fluid and almost naïve narration, we seem, once again, to get closer to the world of Benjy. The links to his section are particularly obvious through a reference to Benjy's mantra about how "people smell like rain"; a few lines before the long analepsis begins, Quentin's narration appears to mirror that of Benjy's: "[...] T. P. was feeding him he started again just whimpering at first until she touched him then he yelled she stood there her eyes like cornered rats then I was running in the grey darkness **it smelled of rain** and all flower scents the damp warm air released and crickets sawing away in the grass [...]" (my emphasis, 126).

The Quentin section then increasingly refers to Benjy's smelling of the rain: "then not two heads the darkness smelled of rain of damp grass and leaves [...]" (130), "in the woods the tree frogs were going smelling rain in the air [...]" (131), and "I had to stop and fasten the gate she went on in the grey light the smell of rain and still it wouldnt rain [...]" (133). As we can see

in the last example, the smell of rain does not refer to, as in Benjy's case, the smell of Caddy, but rather the particular smell of the air when it feels like it will rain. The actual typography that the reader has become intensely familiar with through the narrative, that of "smell" and "rain" connects it inevitably to the textual past.

Quentin's section possesses some recollections as well. We have discussed the recurring references to time and clocks. Likewise, the "Macbethian" shadow seems to linger everywhere, and constantly forces us to both pause and reverse in the narrative in order to create meaning out of its obviousness. In extension, we also associate it intertextually with *Macbeth*. However, the strongest emotional repetitions and recollections are similar to the ones in Benjy's section in that they use words that arouse sensations in the reader. For instance, in the phrase "crickets sawing away in the grass," the image and the sound of the crickets seem to constantly interfere with the memory, like some reminder of the past in its symbolic value of childhood summers. It is a sound that neither comforts nor troubles, Quentin, but reminds the reader of the physicality of memory through its recurrence. It is in the way it addresses primarily the senses of the reader that it constitutes the possibilities of transporting the readers into their own pasts as well as the textual past. As we see with the crickets, it is mainly their sound that creeps into the text: crickets are "sawing," and later "[...] I could hear the crickets watching us in a circle [...]" (130), and "I got up and followed we went up the hill the crickets hushing before us" (129). If we study the long analepsis we find it constantly charged with auditive references; it is simple auditive verbs like "hear," "sound," or "singing" but more often it is onomatopoeic verbs that are charged with an action that makes sounds like "crying," "she rose her skirt **flopped** against her draining [...]" (my emphasis, 126), "the

water **sucked** and **gurgled** across the sand spit [...]” (my emphasis, 126), and “her clothes **rustled** [...]” (my emphasis, 132).

These sounds, as recognized by Karl F. Zender in “Faulkner and the Power of Sound” seem to produce “a heightened awareness of the destructive power of time. Implicit in his effort at preserving the vanishing world of his youth is a sense of the evanescence of reconciliation” (91). Zender means that in Faulkner’s prose, these sounds often work like narrative pauses, that “intrude” on the narrator in their hostility and drive him back “to the world of time and loss” (92). This “intrusion” can, of course, equally work for the reader and force him back in his own past since, as we observed in the case of the Quentin section, these sounds are recognized through their repetitions and their traditional nostalgic and symbolic value.

As we have seen with the smell of rain, Faulkner creates a memory of the senses mostly through the olfactory. Quentin’s memories are cramped with the smell of “damp clothes” (129), “damp grass and leaves” (130), “water” (132), and the “odour of summer and darkness” (143). This last example is especially interesting in its non-specific quality, which encourages the reader to fill in his own smells of summer and darkness into the narrative.

However, most remarkable is, of course, the often recurring smell of honeysuckle, the “saddest odour of all” (143). Quentin associates this peculiar smell with the August night when Caddy loses her virginity. It also seems in a larger context, as Ross and Polk realize, to symbolize sexuality, and then particularly Quentin’s disgust for female sexuality (Ross and Polk 115). Similar to Benjy’s repetition of Caddy smelling like rain, Quentin’s obsessive smell of honeysuckle works in both referring back to the previous times this mantra is used but more importantly; it also forces us back in our

own textual memory of the Edenic scene of Caddy on the pear tree in muddy drawers.

### **Mirror Analogies**

We have observed how Faulkner uses the idea of repetition, recollection, and mirroring through the similarities between Benjy's and Quentin's narration. Faulkner employs repetitive words, phrases, and scenes in order to guide the reader's viewpoint back into the narrative. The memory of the fight with Dalton Ames is similarly mirrored through Faulkner's exquisite transition through parallel temporalities. Quentin's present fight with Gerald is paralleled with his fight a year earlier with Dalton Ames. The transition into parallel narratives is initiated through the image of the little Italian girl Quentin has met earlier. When the car with Quentin, Shreve, and Gerla passes the little girl, the narrative opens up into four different temporalities: the present car ride, the previous episode with the little Italian girl which in its turn mirrors Quentin's brotherhood against Caddy, and then the Dalton Ames episode:

We passed that house, and three others, and another yard where the little girl stood by the gate. She didn't have the bread now, and her face looked like it had been streaked with coal-dust. I waved my hand, but she made no reply, only her head turned slowly as the car passed, following us with her unwinking gaze. (123-24)

It is significant that this image of the girl is one of melancholy; Quentin's gesture of friendship and memory is not returned and the sense of passing time and melancholy is further established through the actual "passing" of the car. It is as if this linking time image encourages us to think about the

earlier episode as a sad, nostalgic one. This confirms the general sadness of past times in Quentin's memories and makes the different narrative temporalities nostalgic for the reader. Quentin's remembrance of the Dalton Ames episode is signalled clearly by Faulkner's use of italics. The unique way in which Faulkner creates two simultaneous temporalities, which in its structure so profoundly mimics that of how our own memory works, can be illustrated by the following excerpt:

'If that hamper is in his way, Mr MacKenzie, move it over on your side. I brought a hamper of wine because I think young gentlemen should drink wine, although my father, Gerald's grandfather' *ever do that Have you ever done that In the grey darkness a little light her hands locked about*

'They do, when they can get it,' Spoade said. 'Hey Shreve?' *her knees her face looking at the sky the smell of honeysuckle upon her face and throat*

'Beer, too,' Shreve said. His hand touched my knee again. I moved my knee again. *like a thin wash of lilac coloured paint talking about him bringing*

'You're not a gentleman,' Spoade said. *him between us until the shape of her blurred not with dark [...]* (124)

This passage is the closest we can come to the cinematic superimposure of images, where we have parallel temporalities *simultaneously*. Of course, it is not only the italics themselves that attract the reader's attention but also the floating, dreamy, involuntary memory aspect of the other temporality. According to Ross and Polk, this is communicated through the lesser control of the narrator's storytelling: the lack of punctuation, grammar, and strange syntax (47). Like earlier memory transitions, we can see certain connections between the present and the past, such as Shreve touching Quentin's knee,

and thus triggering memories around Caddy's knee. Furthermore, the italics seem to have a certain fluidity over the time changes.

Sometimes the blending of times appears in a single sentence: "Now and then the river glinted beyond things in sort of swooping glints, across noon and after" (93). The use of two opposing time definitions (proximate and non-proximate words) in the beginning of the sentence are paralleled in the end with "noon and after," thus creating a hypothetical temporal affect in reaching out for present and past, and present and future.

The Quentin episode contains much nostalgic imagery. We encounter images of water and rivers: the piece of bark that "float[s] away" (134) in the water, or water that ripples (127) and "all the oceans all around the world" (127). We also notice the recurrence of clocks or time specifics such as the afternoon and the twilight. Nostalgia echoes strongly in a phrase such as "the train dying away, as though it were running through another month or another summer somewhere [...]" (101). Furthermore, there is a concentration of summer images such as butterflies, crickets, tree frogs, swings, roses, honeysuckle, and cedars. This summer imagery also evokes non-visual senses such as sound and smells. Universal grief is accentuated through the use of the shadow as a symbol of death.

As Ross and Polk identify in the following time shift, most of the imagery and motifs are associated with Caddy (Ross and Polk 86):

"What a shame that you should have a mouth like that it should be on a girl's face" and can you imagine *the curtains leaning in on the twilight upon the odour of the apple tree her head against the twilight her arms behind her head kimono-winged the voice that breathed o'er eden clothes upon the bed by the nose seen above the apple* what he said? just seventeen, mind. (88)



The twilight, especially in the expression "*her head against the twilight*" is associated later with Quentin's memory of the central image of Caddy's muddy drawers, where Caddy's "face was a white blur framed out of the blur of the sand by her hair" (126), and the apple tree alludes to both the Edenic quality of the central image and Caddy climbing the pear tree. The association of smell links both to the smell of the tree that Benjy associates with Caddy in his reoccurring "smells like trees" and the pear tree itself. "*seen above*" equals the three brothers' perspective glancing up on Caddy on the branch of the pear tree and her muddy drawers. Similarly, the associations to the central image, which is preceded by Caddy in the water and mud, are to be found in several scenes which evoke the motif of cleansing and water. Examples of this are the Natalie episode, the boys swimming in the River in Harvard, and, of course, Quentin's suicide in the river. The simple sketching of the central image early in Benjy's narrative is thus constantly re-evoked, altered, and added to.

### **The Universality of Loss: The Last Section**

One part of the nostalgic sentiment of the novel can perhaps be attributed to Faulkner's romantic ideas of the vanished South. He himself denied any such attributes in his literature; instead he furiously attacked historical fiction as "a degenerate form" and a "sentimentalization of the past" (Rollyson 14). Nevertheless, in his more personal recordings of the past South, there is a tendency to romanticize. His retelling of his grandfather's, the old Colonel's, adventures and misfortunes, certainly breathe a sense of overcharged reality:

“He [old Colonel] built the first railroad in our country, wrote a few books, made grand European tour of his time, died in a duel and the country raised a marble effigy which still stands in Tippah County” (Blotner 24). According to David M. Wyatt, the truth was that there was no duel; the colonel was actually shot from the side while crossing Ripley Town Square, and the marble effigy was purchased by the colonel himself (Wyatt 99).

The South that Faulkner grew up in, and that was the location for all his writing, was a very conservative one. Robert Penn Warren describes the rural South as,

[...] cut-off, inward-turning, backward-looking. It was a culture frozen in its virtues and vices, and even for the generation that grew up after World War I, that South offered an image of massive immobility in all ways, an image, if one was romantic, of the unchangeableness of the human condition, beautiful, sad, painful, tragic – sunlight slanting over a mellow autumn field, a field the more precious for the fact that its yield had been meager. (3)

It is true that the characters of *The Sound and the Fury* all show signs of failure, tragedy, and immobility. Quentin is constantly battling the clash between his father’s old fashioned view of life and women, and the new times represented by Caddy and his Harvard life. His suicide is the result of a decision not to participate in life’s meaninglessness. Jason, too, fights the burden of his own past but in different ways. He is obsessed by the decline of everything associated with the family: the mansion, the honour of the family, and the Compson traditions. This decline is described subtly in the contrast between the old-fashioned gravel road up to the mansion and the main modern concrete road below.

Is it really, however, the specific decline of the South that is central here? *The Sound and the Fury* certainly is no historical novel in the Victorian sense; there is neither the spectacle nor the antiquarianism so often found in historical novels. There is, of course, a story of a family, but not in an epic sense, since the information about this family is densely blurred through the interiorities of the main characters. Surely, like Rollyson notes, the novel is also about “characters who are obsessed with a personal, family, or regional past” (1), but the key word here is *personal*. The historical novel has an omniscient view of things, usually told in classic third person narratives, or a frame narrative, where the narrator in the frame has the opportunity to comment and judge, and thus bring the story into a more universal context. Matthews writes in “Faulkner’s Narrative Frames” that “the frame promises to be the site of fuller comprehension and the point of contact between the plights of the individual characters and the historical realities that condition the narrative” (74). This means that an unframed story such as *The Sound and the Fury* is less able to transcend from its personal experience into a more social and historic one because “loss is strictly personal and seems to impinge on characters purely in psychological and emotional registers” (Matthews, “Faulkner’s Narrative Frames” 74).

The last section takes place on April 8, 1928, and thus it is not only textually but also chronologically the last part of the story. It could have had the role of, if not framing, at least contextualizing, or commenting on the earlier three sections in a way that would be expected of a historical novel. This is, however, not the case. The last section’s difference from the previous sections is to be found in its narrative mood. It is clearly not as strictly focalized as the earlier parts. The master narrative voice of Faulkner shines through this section in the opening paragraph:

The day dawned bleak and chill, a moving wall of grey light out of the north-east which, instead of dissolving into moisture, seemed to disintegrate into minute and venomous particles, like dust that, when Dilsey opened the door of the cabin and emerged, needled laterally into her flesh, precipitating not so much a moisture as a substance partaking of the quality of thin, not quite congealed oil. (225)

It is a description that takes place before the section's main character enters the stage. We are not sharing Dilsey's impressions, but Faulkner's.

Furthermore, several times in the course of the narrative, we are permitted to leave the perspective or spatiality of Dilsey, such as when Jason drives away: "He [Jason] was twenty miles away at that time. When he left the house he drove rapidly to town [...]" (256). There is no general conception of the particularity of the past South that glimmers through the overtly narrated part, but instead there is a very important master narrative voice that concludes the sentiments of the prior three sections: that of the sad progress of time and change, and loss of belief. If we return to the part's opening paragraph, we notice the choice of words "bleak," "chill," "grey," "disintegrate," "venomous," clearly indicating a melancholic state of mind.

Instead of looking at historic or social contexts, we must, like Marco Abel in "One Goal is Still Lacking: The Influence of Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy on William Faulkner's 'The Sound and the Fury'," acknowledge the sense of something vanished to a more Nietzschean pessimism and a general concept of meaninglessness closely related to that of nostalgia. Benjy, Quentin, and Jason are all so obsessed with their own pasts that there is not really any chance for a sustained meaning in their present lives. Quentin is, perhaps, the most nihilistic of them, but also the one with the intellectual

ability to address and communicate this nihilism. If we link nostalgia with nihilism, or rather the entropic, we can appreciate why the sense of nostalgia, the meaninglessness of our short time on earth, manifests itself so strongly in the last section. "And what else but chaos," asks Abel, "faces the reader exposed to *The Sound and the Fury* for the first time?" (42-43). The chaos in recreating the chronology echoes the chaos of temporalities in modern man, similar to what Nietzsche acknowledged in the 1880s and 1890s: "a clearly structured form of narration is an inappropriate way of coping with the dawn of the modern age" (Abel 41). The lack of classic structure in the novel, the many anachronies, and the difficulties associated with stream of consciousness and interior monologues, create a sense of uneasiness in the reader, an aura of disbelief in the future and the overwhelming strength of the past. It is reminiscent of the Shakespearean quotation from *Macbeth* that inspired the title of the novel.

The importance of the last section, in terms of the nostalgic experience, lies not therefore in its contextualization of the vanished South, even though a Southerner perhaps could read this into his own experience. Rather, it is, in its overt master narrative voice, a conclusion of the chaos and nihilism expressed in the previous three sections. It is at times almost a requiem over the progress of time in a variety of phrases and nostalgic imagery that echo death and decay: "The clock tick-tocked, solemn and profound. It might have been the dry pulse of the decaying house itself [...]" (242), "It might have been all time and injustice and sorrow become vocal for an instant by a conjunction of planets" (244), "trees that partook also of the foul desiccation which surrounded the houses; trees whose very burgeoning seemed to be the sad and stubborn remnant of September, as if even spring had passed them by [...]" (247), "As the scudding day passed overhead the dingy windows

glowed and faded in ghostly retrograde. A car passed along the road outside, labouring in the sand, died away" (250), "for the first time Jason saw clear and unshadowed the disaster toward which he rushed" (263). Even Dilsey who "seed de beginning," and now "sees de endin" (253) acknowledges this universal grief.

If any belief in the importance of our own persona persists, it is definitely broken in the end, together with Benjy's narcissus. Beverly Gross writes that "[t]he novel becomes more objectified, more outwardly social, more universalized [...]" in the end, and this suggests that Benjy becomes "more and more an embodiment of the suffering of all mankind" (Gross 287). Benjy's screams in the end might perhaps allude to Kuntz's "horror" in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "For an instant Ben sat in an utter hiatus. Then he bellowed. Bellow on bellow, his voice mounted, with scarce interval for breath. There was more than astonishment in it, it was horror; shock; agony eyeless, tongueless; just sound [...]" (271). Benjy's sentiment, in turn, reverberates Quentin's tormented experience of the sound of the bird, "a sound meaningless and profound, inflexionless, ceasing as though cut off with the blow of a knife, and again, and that sense of water swift and peaceful above secret places, felt, not seen not heard" (114). This passage echoes Sartre's words, "Man's misfortune lies in his being time-bound": it is only in death, as in death by water, that the meaningless cry of horror, "the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun" (268-69) is heard no more.



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## Glossary

**Anachronies:** The temporal discrepancies between *story* and *narrative*.

**Analepsis:** Retrospection in the narrative of a past story event. Internal analepses reach back after the start of the first narrative. External analepses reach back before the start of the first narrative.

**Analeptic Structure:** The *analeptic structure* suggest a frame structure where a narrator subsequently narrates the events of some past imagination or experience, thus creating a distinct “now” and “then” on which he is liable to comment. The use of first person narration further stimulates the private nature of the recollection and aids the seductive qualities of the narration; it grants the narrator a greater freedom in rearranging the temporal order of events.

**Analeptic Narrative:** This is the main body of past story events that are told from the first narrative. It is actually the *second narrative* but in order to emphasize that it is the main narrative (the main body of the text) we will refer to it as the analeptic narrative.

**Asyndeton:** connects clauses through the use of comma.

**Clock Time:** This refers to Time as progressing and irreversible. It is also known as objective time, monumental time, or mechanical time.

**Closed Nostalgia:** Nostalgia evoked through art that is more specific and needs a specific knowledge, culture, ethnicity, or personality, in order to be evoked.

**Competent Reader:** A theoretically constructed reader in order to fully understand how certain responses can be evoked in readers. The competent reader brings in history, sociology, anthropology, aesthetics, language, linguistic competence into the critical close reading when necessary.

**Diegetic Emotions:** Emotions that are basically related to the text.

**Distance:** Literary distance is created through the use of subsequent narration and the use of a narrator who is somewhat removed from the



events and characters he is describing. Distance can also be achieved if the narrator himself is a character in the story. This distant mood almost always requires a non-focalized narration.

**Dualism of Nostalgia:** This refers to the contrasts between joy and sadness that defines nostalgia. This dualism creates a range of dichotomies such as now and then, here and there, joy and sadness, life and death, new and old etc. These dichotomies are of outmost importance when it comes to recreating nostalgia through aesthetics and representation.

**Duration:** The speed of a narrative in relation to the story confirms the narrative's duration. It can be either *a pause* (narrative < story), *a scene* (narrative=story), *summary* (narrative>story), or *an ellipsis* (a cut to a new story event).

**Durée:** Bergson's concept of subjective time as contrast to clock time is called *durée*. It is also known as inner time, duration, or Bergsonian time.

**Emotion:** An emotion (feeling) can either be a basic emotion (singular and pure) or a complex emotion (constituted of more than one emotion). Modern research tends to see emotions as cognitive with intentionality and an object or action triggering it.

**External Nostalgia:** External nostalgia is *not* related to our own biography and person. It is the nostalgia for a time or place we never have experienced. This was formerly referred to as public nostalgia.

**External Nostalgic Fictive Experience:** This is a nostalgic experience that is triggered by the text (*textual nostalgia*) and that in turn trigger an *external nostalgia* (something not experienced in real life).

**Extradiegetic Narrator:** A narrator who narrates the first narrative.

**Extra-textual Emotional Experience:** When emotions involved in experience of a text are *not* triggered by the text itself but by other external influences, we speak of extra-textual emotional experiences.

**First Narrative:** The main narrative and also the narrative that starts the narration.

**Focalization:** Part of the *narrative mood*. Focalization is concerned with from which perspective and how a narrative is perceived. It can either be a *non-focalized* narrative (omniscient narrator), an *internally focalized* narrative (filtered through a character in the story: interior monologue, stream of consciousness, free indirect speech), or an *externally focalized* narrative (when the narration is being performed by a hero but without the readers ever accessing his mind or thoughts).

**Free Indirect Speech (FIS):** A mix between first and third person narration which retains the omniscient tone of indirect speech but at the same time enters into a more focalized style through a first person.

**Frequency:** The number of times a story event is told in the narrative. It can be *singular* (narrative tells once what happens once in story), *repetitive* (narrative tells several times what happens once in the story), or *iterative* (narrative tells once what happens several times in the story).

**Heterodiegetic Narrator:** A narrator that stands *outside* the world he is narrating.

**Homodiegetic Analepsis:** Transporting us to a past story event while not confusing us about the place and time we are transported to in the narrative, as well as referring to a past time that is part of the first narrative.

**Homodiegetic Narrator:** A narrator that is *part of* the world he is narrating.

**Homomaterial Souvenirs:** Physical objects that are part of the nostalgic past it triggers.

**Hypothetical Nostalgia.** This belongs to *internal nostalgia* even though strictly speaking it is not a longing for a place or a time but a general sense of timelessness or disillusion of temporality. The effect of this dissolution is one of awareness and sadness over the time arrow and the irreversibility of time, as well as a sense of that the present is in fact the nostalgia of tomorrow.

**Identity Theme:** A term coined by Norman Holland which means a personal way of dealing with everyday situations that spill over on our interpretation of texts as well.

***Imaginative Memorative Signs:*** Trigger nostalgia through dreams, thoughts, hopes, that are created within our intelligence and being and act as the motivation for recreating our memories or dreams

***Internal Nostalgia:*** Internal nostalgia is related to our own biography and person. It is the most common nostalgia and typical examples are our childhood and our first love. This was formerly referred to as private nostalgia.

***Internal Nostalgic Fictive Experience:*** This is a nostalgic experience that is triggered by the text (*textual nostalgia*) and that in turn triggers an *internal nostalgia* (something personally experienced). This nostalgia does not necessarily have to have anything to do with the text; the text functions primarily as a motivator.

***Intradiegetic Narrator:*** A narrator that narrates the second narrative.

***Involuntary Memory:*** A memory that is recalled subconsciously *without* will.

***Iterative Frequency:*** When several story events are retold only once in the narrative. Example: "I remember all those parties that summer."

***Macro-Nostalgia:*** Nostalgia evoked through larger units of text such as narrative structures and persistent narrative mood or voice.

***Memorative Signs:*** Motivates and triggers the nostalgia. They can be divided into *souvenirs* (physical objects), *sensations*, *situations*, and *imaginations*.

***Memorial Nostalgia.*** Belongs to *internal nostalgia* and deals with times we are nostalgic for that we have experienced.

***Memory:*** A remembrance of a past event without the regret or reflective phase that defines nostalgia. Memories can be either *voluntary* or *involuntary*.

***Meta-Experience:*** An experience that for different reasons assures us that it is in fact fiction and not reality we are experiencing. This can commonly be created through the Brechtian *Verfremdungseffekt* or a variety of techniques that reveal the structures of art and violates our sense of simulation.

**Metaphysical Nostalgia:** This belongs to *external nostalgia* and the object of nostalgia is grounded in human existence but used metaphorically or symbolically to convey a bigger idea – a metaphysical idea, a melancholic state of mind in relation to death versus life.

**Micro-Nostalgia:** Nostalgia evoked through small units of text such as signs, words, sentences, syntax, and paragraphs.

**Mood:** Typically less intense and more sustained as well as more subconscious than emotions and also less bound to the intentionality and cognitive character we find in emotions.

**Motivation:** Triggers a nostalgic experience or reaction. See *Nostalgic Reaction*.

**Narrative:** How the plot is narrated.

**Narrative Mood:** The distance between story and narrative as well as who *sees* (focalization).

**Narrative Voice:** Refers primarily to the voice of the narrator or narrators who report the narrative. When we explore the aspects of voice we study the relations between the narrator – plus, should the occasion arise, his or their narratee(s) – and the story he tells. Simplified, it is about who *tells*.

**Non-Diegetic Emotions:** Emotions that are basically related to the biography/personality of a person.

**Non-Textual Nostalgia:** Nostalgia that is evoked within the nostalgic fictive experience but not related to the text itself.

**Nostalgee:** The person who is nostalgic.

**Nostalgia (the):** The space or time one is nostalgic for. See *Nostalgic Reaction*.

**Nostalgia in Art:** Based on a distinction by Ricœur, nostalgia in art refers to ideas, theories, or characters that through representation and content explicitly echo nostalgia.

**Nostalgic Art:** Based on a distinction by Ricœur that refers to nostalgia which is evoked through a phenomenological or aesthetic experience of nostalgia through form and style.

**Nostalgic Experience:** The feeling of nostalgic emotions or being in a nostalgic mood.

**Nostalgic Fictive Experience:** When a nostalgic experience is triggered or evoked by a fictive experience.

**Nostalgic Mood:** The nostalgic mood is less concerned with the actual *nostalgia* (object of nostalgia) than a general feeling of sadness of the irreversibility of time. Fear of death and personal annihilation, as well as *carpe diem*, are emotions that linger close to the nostalgic mood. These nihilistic feelings are usually called *universal grief*.

**Nostalgic Reaction:** The nostalgic emotional experience can be divided into three main phases: *motivation*, *nostalgia*, and *reflection* each one triggering the other in chronological order. *Motivation* is what triggers the reaction, *nostalgia* is what or when one is nostalgic for, and *reflection* is the psychological, philosophical, and more cognitive reaction to the second phase. Generally the phase of *nostalgia* is pleasant and happy and the *reflective* phase one of sadness, regret, and sense of loss.

**Nostalgic Tropes:** Nostalgic tropes refer to imagery, ideas, metaphors, and symbols that in different ways work evocative of nostalgia.

**Ontological Nostalgia:** This belongs to *external nostalgia* and the object of nostalgia is either a future or a mythological time and space.

**Open nostalgia:** Nostalgia evoked through art that is very general and not specific and thus open for most people.

**Paradox of Fiction:** Resulting from the cognitive theories of emotions and which deals with how we can feel emotions related to fiction when emotions need intentionality and real objects (real fear, real anger, afraid *of* the dog, angry *at* the police etc.)

**Polysyndeton:** Connects clauses through the use of the words "and," "or," "but," and "nor."

**Potentiality of a Text:** In regard to the subjective experience of emotions in texts we speak of a text's potentiality or possibility to evoke specific emotions in a reader.

**Presence:** Literary *presence* is created basically through activating the mood so that it is close to either the consciousness of the character or narrator. This entails internal focalization as well as the use of free indirect speech and immediate speech. We also see a higher use of the descriptive pause, longer durations in scenes, and an inclusion of the reader in the intimacy of the narrative by either activating him in the reading process or clearly addressing him as a narratee.

**Prolepsis:** Anticipation in the narrative of a future story event. Internal prolepses reach forward within the first narrative. External prolepses reach forward to after the first narrative.

**Pseudo-Iterative Frequency:** When several story events are retold once in the narrative but in a way that seems to be too detailed to be entirely true.

**Pseudo-Memorial Nostalgia:** This belongs to *external nostalgia* and refers to a longing for a space or time that one has not experienced in person.

**Reflection:** The phase of a nostalgic experience which brings in the sad element of nostalgia when one understands that the memory (nostalgia) is gone or impossible to recreate. See *The Nostalgic Reaction*.

**Representative Souvenirs:** Physical objects that represent something from the nostalgic time or place it triggers.

**Second Narrative:** The second narrative within the *first narrative*. Usually a story within a story.

**Selected Memory:** The sense that we somehow idealize or choose certain parts of a memory in order to make it seem happier than it perhaps was in reality.

**Sensational Memorative Signs:** When nostalgia is triggered mainly by a sensational experience such as smell, taste, sound, music, or feeling, rather than a physical object or visual sign.

**Simulation:** Walton's idea that we create a belief and a truth through our interaction with the fictive world in a game of make-believe, but the emotions are not real emotions but *quasi-emotions*.

**Situational Memorative Signs:** Signs that trigger nostalgia through situations or symbols that encourage ideas of stability and repetition. Such examples are summer, birthday, and Christmas.

**Souvenirs:** Physical objects that act as *memorative signs* or *motivation* for nostalgic experience.

**Spatial Nostalgia.** This belongs to *internal nostalgia* and deals with spaces that we are nostalgic for and have experienced. The idea of "home" is in its different metaphorical meanings especially valid here.

**Story:** The plot in chronological order.

**Textual Emotional Experience:** When emotions involved in experience of a text *are* triggered by the text itself.

**Textual Memory:** The reader's memory of the past narrative.

**Textual Nostalgia:** Nostalgia that is evoked through the text.

**...the Hero:** When the narrator and the hero of the narrative is one and the same (*homodiegetic narrator*) it is important to separate the two of them. The one who is the hero is then called *the Hero*.

**...the Narrator:** When the narrator and the hero of the narrative is one and the same (*homodiegetic narrator*) it is important to separate the two of them. The one who is the narrator is then called *the Narrator*.

**Universal Grief:** The nihilistic feeling that the laws of life are grieving and bleak; that our time on earth is very short, and an awareness of the teleological and entropic aspects of life.

**Voluntary Memory:** A memory that is recalled by will.

**Wandering Viewpoint:** Wolfgang Iser's perception of the act of reading can be illustrated as a process (a wandering viewpoint) that constantly involves

anticipation and retrospection which changes how we experience the present narrative.